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SIX YEARS  
IN THE  
MONASTERIES OF ITALY,  
AND  
TWO YEARS  
IN THE  
ISLANDS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN  
AND IN ASIA MINOR:

CONTAINING  
A View of the Manners and Customs of the Popish Clergy in  
Ireland, France, Italy, Malta, Corfu, Zante, Smyrna, &c.  
WITH ANECDOTES AND REMARKS  
ILLUSTRATING SOME OF THE PECULIAR DOCTRINES OF THE  
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

✓  
BY REV. S. I. MAHONEY,  
LATE A CAPUCHIN FRIAR IN THE CONVENT OF THE IMMACULATE  
CONCEPTION AT ROME.

Οὐχ ἀνδάνει τοῦ Δαίμονος εὐασιν τὸ θρησκεύειν.

A superstitious worship is not pleasing to God.—*Greek Proverb.*

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PHILADELPHIA:  
EDWARD C. BIDDLE, 23 MINOR STREET.  
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## P R E F A C E .

AMONG the many works lately published in this country on the subject of the Roman Catholic Church, not one, it has been observed, is fitted to give the Protestant reader a just notion of the leading features of that religion. It is not enough, in order that Protestants may justly appreciate the blessings of Gospel freedom, to lay open to the world the conduct of some few of the Clergy—to hold up, to the execration of the public, the vices practised within the well secured cloisters of nuns, and to expose the artifices and impositions of priests—but it is also necessary to make it clear, that such effects are the necessary consequences of the system itself. And who can better fulfil that duty (for duty it certainly is) than some one who formerly belonged to the Romish priesthood? The author of the following pages often wished to see the subject taken up by abler hands than his own, but his wishes have been hitherto in vain. Having spent a great part of his life—from his sixteenth to his twenty-third year—

secluded within the walls of a monastery, and having been educated in the capital of Popery, he offers to the public the following pages—a narrative of his own life and experience—hoping they may serve as an antidote against the sly and plausible endeavours of Popish Priests, who, even in this free country, with the true spirit of their church, wish, and are daily endeavouring to subvert the faith of unstable Protestants. If he succeed in fully impressing on the minds of Protestants the dangers of Popery, and in unmasking the plausible excuses of its advocates, he will not consider his labour as thrown away. If he succeed in saving one, *only one*, whether Protestant or Romanist, male or female, from the dangerous gulf of monachism, he will think himself more than repaid. Recommending the work to the Father of light, who sees the purity of his intentions, and without whose aid no beneficial results can follow from it, he submits himself and it to a religious and discerning public.

PHILADELPHIA, July, 1836.



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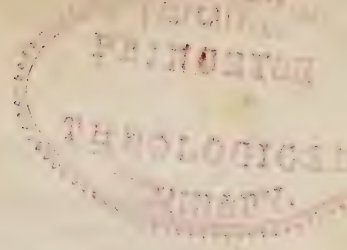
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# SIX YEARS

IN THE

## MONASTERIES OF ITALY, &c.

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### CHAPTER I.

Introduction—The Author's birth and education—Dedication of children—Evil effects thereof—Two instances—First confession—Its effects on the Author's mind—The Capuchin Superior in Ireland—Meddling of Priests in private families.

THE religion of Rome, miscalled *Catholic*, a short history of which, as it exists in the monasteries and other Popish institutions of Italy and the Islands of the Mediterranean, will form the subject of this book, is so well guarded by the passions—the attendants of human nature—that it requires more than an ordinary effort of the human mind to free itself from its galling trammels. It is indeed the religion of human nature, whether it be regarded in a temporal or spiritual light. If in the latter, the influence exercised over the minds of its members by a wily priesthood, and the dangerous security, so different from the Gospel *fear* and *trembling*, into which they are lulled by the organs of confession, and forgiveness by the mouth of a priest, fully prove that human nature is only flattered by its operations : if in the former, the numerous ceremo-

nies so pleasing to the senses, the superstitious veneration in which its clergy are held, and the opportunities possessed by them of reconciling the people to every passing event, and which opportunities they never let slip; all these form separate and convincing proofs, that human nature is the foundation stone, on which the Romish church is built. The foregoing reflections were strongly brought to my mind, whilst considering my own peculiar case, and the difficulties I had to struggle with before embracing the blessed and consoling doctrine of justification through the all-atoning blood of Jesus Christ. To break not only through the prejudices of education, but also to set at defiance the workings of the passions by which the church of Rome is upheld, is, all must confess, no easy matter. How I have been able to accomplish that great task will be seen in the sequel. To the history of my early life, though it may contain many things, which worldly prudence would consider as best kept in my own bosom, yet as it is a picture—a faithful one too—of the education of Roman Catholic children in Ireland, and especially of those destined for the priesthood, I have no hesitation to give publicity.

I was born in the city of C——, Ireland. My father was a corn-merchant of that city, respectably connected, though not rich. I am the last of five children, and was *destined* for the church from the hour of my birth. I say, *destined*; for strange as it may appear, such a custom of setting apart young children for the service of the church, prevailed and still prevails in Ireland, as well as in most parts of popish Europe. The child's vocation is never consulted, and how could it be, when his future profession is marked out, whilst he is yet an infant, and unable to judge for himself? If, however, he should



refuse, when arrived at the age of understanding, to fulfil what his father had promised,\* he is looked upon, not only by the members of his own family, but also by his neighbours and acquaintances, as one living in a state of alienation from God, and as one, who never can have any success in the transactions of the world. I knew in Italy a young man—he belonged to Albano, a town in the papal states—who, not coming to the age of understanding till after his father's death, thought proper to consult his own inclinations, and to decline the honor of the priesthood, though his father, at his birth, had dedicated him to the church. Wishing afterwards to enter into the married state, he could find no young woman, his equal in rank, who could be prevailed upon to unite her lot with his. He was once on the point of being married to one of a neighbouring town, but when she came to the knowledge of his having been destined by his father for the priesthood, she immediately broke off the match, although he was possessed of a handsome fortune, and very well able to maintain her respectably. All are taught that a curse from on high would fall either on themselves or their children, should they unite themselves to one, promised from his infancy to God. I knew another—his name was Papi—, a young man of a most prepossessing appearance, and possessed of a cultivated mind, who, refusing to become a priest, was absolutely turned adrift on the world by his father, and all this, because the latter had promised him to God from his infancy. Starvation at length obliged him to succumb to his father's wishes, and he was sacrificed—another unwilling victim—at the monstrous shrine of popular superstition. I saw him

\* The selecting of a new-born child for the priesthood is considered as a vow, or promise.

after his ordination, and he had no difficulty in complaining to me of the cruelty of his parents, who obliged him to embrace a profession for which he had no vocation. I could mention many other cases of this nature, which fell under my own observation, but the two related will be sufficient to show the evil effects necessarily following the dedication of children.

My father, however, had no occasion to threaten me with such extremes, for I never resisted, but, on the contrary, was rather desirous of entering the church, though indeed had I murmured against fulfilling his vow, I am almost certain, that he, although the kindest and best of fathers, would have treated me with the same rigour, with which my friend Papi had been treated by his;—such power have superstition and the erroneous ideas of religion over even the best minds.

It being then understood, that I was destined for the church, my earliest notions were formed by priests. Every moment I could spare from my studies was spent either with them, or in some place under their direction. At ten years of age, I was taught to babble the answering of mass in Latin, and obliged to remain daily two or three hours at the Chapel, as Roman Catholic churches are called in Ireland. Sunday was a day of trouble to me—not of devotion; being forced to spend nearly the whole day serving masses, of which I very soon grew tired. Indeed, there was nothing in the repeating of words in Latin—a language I did not then understand, which could make amends for the trouble, and I often longed to be as free as my other brothers, who not being intended for the church, were allowed to divert themselves with their equals. The time for making my first confession now approached. I shall for ever remember, with what a palpitating heart I

first approached the seat of judgment—the confessional—called by Romanists “the tribunal of penance.” How my young inexperienced heart, impressed with an exalted idea of the priest’s power of forgiving sin, sank within me, as I knelt down at the feet of him, who, I was led to believe, represented the person of Jesus Christ. It remains still impressed on my mind, with what an authoritative tone of voice he questioned me on my most secret thoughts, reproving me for this and giving penance for that; and how happy I felt, and how free from all care, when he pronounced in Latin the form of absolution. Yes, if an ignorance of my lost sinful state, and a reliance on man for salvation, can be called happiness, I was then happy indeed. But was my heart changed in the mean time?—Or did I feel a detestation of sin, and love the Lord Jesus for his own sake? Quite the contrary! I never thought about the necessity of a change of heart; and my prayers were, by the advice of my Father Confessor, addressed to the Virgin and the Saints, and not to Him, who alone is able to grant the humble penitent a true sorrow for sin, and to inflame his mind with a holy love for Himself. So far from feeling a sorrow for sin, my ambition was only excited the more to become a priest, and thereby become vested with the extraordinary power of forgiving the sins of others; thinking at the same time, that if I once had possession of the super-human power of forgiving others, I could also, *a fortiori*, forgive myself, without being indebted to another person for that favor. Such were my peculiar feelings after my first confession, and such, I am confident, are the feelings of the greater number of Roman Catholics under similar circumstances.

Having now nearly reached my sixteenth year, and having acquired as much Latin and Greek at a

preparatory school, as was deemed sufficient for admittance to College, it began to be debated upon in the family circle, whether I should go to Maynooth, or rather be sent to Rome. The latter place was preferred ; and the reason it was so, it may perhaps be necessary to mention here. It will give the protestant reader some idea of the influence exercised by priests in those families with which they are intimate.

A Capuchin friar, Provincial of the order in Ireland, was a frequent visiter at my father's house. He took particular notice of me, of course, as one destined to become a priest one day himself. He even, at my father's request, often examined me in the Latin grammar, and cried out "*bravo, bravo,*" if I could conjugate *amo*, or decline *musa*. He took care, however, never to go farther in his examinations than the grammar, the reason for which I never could learn, unless it be, which is not improbable, that he knew no farther himself. When the subject of my removal to college began to be debated upon, he also gave his opinion, and of course decided in favour of his own order. The going so far from home (it being necessary to go to Rome, in order to become a member of his order) was for some time objected to; but he being my father's confessor soon overruled that objection, by laying open the respectability of his order, and the powerful intercession of its founder St. Francis, and the happiness of having a son so intimately connected with the holy patriarch. These weighty reasons met with due attention from my father, and all thoughts of going to Maynooth college were soon laid aside, and preparations were immediately made for my journey to Rome. I was not, at this time, old enough to see into the reason, that the old friar was so anxious that I should join his order, but I afterwards



suspected it, when I became aware, that the remittances of money sent to me by my father, passed through his hands. It is reasonable then to suppose, that he did not want for excuses to apply some of it to his own private use. Whether he has done so, or not, I cannot assert with any certainty; but this I am sure of, that I never received more than two-thirds of what my father, as I learned from his letters, had committed to him for my use. The deficiency was accounted for, by his being obliged to pay the postage of letters, sent by his friends in Rome, relative to me, and by his sending them some presents, to encourage them to continue their friendship and protection of me. I once complained to my father by letter of this deficiency, but the above reasons of the old friar's soon quieted him. To do him justice, he gave me a great many letters to his private friends at Rome, where he had studied himself some thirty years before, strongly recommending me to their friendship. He also in his capacity of superior of the order in Ireland, gave me an *ubbedienza* (so letters of admission into a monastery are called) directed to the General of the whole order at Rome. I would not be so particular in the relation of the foregoing circumstances had I not thought, that they show the Jesuitical pranks of priests, and the unworthy use they make of their influence over the minds of their deluded followers.

## CHAPTER II.

Departure for Rome—My father's last words at parting—Reflections—Arrival in Paris—French clergy—State of religion in France—Disrespect shown to the Clergy by the French—An instance of it—Lyons—Conversation with an innkeeper—His description of French religion—French Protestants—Church of Lyons—Arians—Conversion of 1500 Papists—Their return to Popery—For what reason—Present revivals.

THE day fixed for my departure at length arrived, and with a heart torn asunder by the contending emotions of joy and sorrow; joy for the sure prospect held out of arriving at the goal of my wishes, sorrow, for leaving my father and mother and those, who were dearest to me, I embarked in my native city for Bristol—thence to proceed to Southampton, where I was to find the regular packet for Havre-de-Grace, and then proceed by land to Rome. My father's last words to me, spoken, whilst I was in the act of going aboard the steamer, will ever remain indelibly fixed in my memory. They were these, "*Return a priest, or never let me see you again.*" What words from the kindest and best of fathers! Without considering, whether on further examination, I would feel inclined for such a profession, or whether I would not be rendered miserable all my life, if I acted in that respect contrary to my own inclinations, he laid his positive injunction upon me "*to return a priest*" under pain of perpetual exile from him, and from those dearest to me. Yet he was the kindest and best of fathers in other respects; indeed in every thing, where the influence of the Roman Catholic religion did not enter. But where that was in any way concerned, he always re-

gulated his actions by the advice of the priests, and especially his confessor's; who, to be sure, with the true spirit of their church, gave that advice which they thought most likely to promote its well-being; regardless, whether this advice would not sow dissensions in families, and set father against son, and wife against husband.—But such, it is well known, is popish morality.

Upon my arrival at Havre, I immediately took a place in the *diligence* for Paris, which Capital, if I well remember, I reached after a journey of two days. I had letters for some Irish students and priests in the Irish college at Paris, and my first care, after my arrival, was to deliver them.

The greater part of these strongly advised me, not to go to Rome, telling me many stories of the hardships, which I probably would have to endure there; and of the very many, who went there, on the same purpose as myself, but who returned before the expiration of a year, having made shipwreck of their faith and vocation. To all this I turned a deaf ear, being determined, whatever would be the consequence, to continue my journey and judge for myself when arrived at Rome. Perhaps also, my father's parting admonition helped me on to this decision. The disrespect with which the clergy are treated in France, and especially in Paris, very much surprised me. I had no idea that the men, who in Ireland are esteemed as demi-gods, could in France be exposed to the insults, not only of the common people, but also of the higher ranks, who forget that politeness natural to every Frenchman, when a priest is in question. I remember, whilst walking one day in the neighbourhood of the *Palais Royal* at Paris, to have seen a great crowd collected in one spot. I went to see what was the matter. I saw an unfortunate man, whom I knew to be a priest from

his dress, stretched in the street, and bleeding profusely, a carriage having thrown him down, and passed over one of his legs, whilst he was passing from one side of the street to the other. The crowd collected around him, rich and poor as they were, stood laughing at him, and seemingly rejoiced at his misfortune. He was unable to walk, so dreadfully was he bruised and mangled. Now, if the same accident had happened in Ireland to one of the same character, there is not a Roman Catholic, or Protestant either, I believe, in the country that would not feel honored in bearing on his own shoulders to his house, the unfortunate sufferer. I mention this anecdote, in order to give some idea of the hatred and detestation in which priests are held in France. On relating the occurrence to my friends at the Irish college, they only made a laugh of it, saying that I was but yet a stranger in France, but were I to remain long in the country, I would soon become familiarized to such scenes. Indeed, they told me seriously, that there is more respect in France for the commonest porter that parades the streets in search of a load, than for a priest, however learned and pious. To one lately come from Ireland, called by the French priests, when comparing their own state with that of their Irish brethren, “*le paradis des prêtres*”—the priests’ paradise; such stories must have appeared wonderfully strange, yet, in the course of my travels through other departments of France, I found, that they were literally true. Whilst at Lyons, where I remained some days, before crossing the Alps into Italy, I put up at one of the hotels—the “*hotel des Etats Unis*” I believe it was called—Entering one evening into conversation with *mine host*, he asked me, what was my profession, and for what object I was going to Italy? I told him the plain truth. He



then began *sacre-ing* all the priests in the world, calling them a parcel of knaves and impostors, and told me plainly, that if I were not going away the following day, he should be under the necessity of requesting me to find another hotel, for he would not have his house contaminated by the presence of even an *intended priest*. He assured me, "that if a priest dared enter his house, he would throw him out through the window, lest the respectability of his hotel should be injured, if it were known abroad, that it had sheltered so detestable an *animal* as a priest." I asked him, if he were a Roman Catholic? "I am," he replied, "because my father was one, but I never go to mass, nor are there one hundred people in the town, who ever go to it." He added, that they remain Roman Catholics, because their fathers were so before them, but that they never follow any of the foolish doctrines of priests. It may perhaps be suspected, that this man was a solitary instance, and that he did not speak the truth, when he told me—perhaps, in order to deter me from becoming a priest—that his fellow-townsmen were like himself. But farther inquiry fully convinced me, that he had spoken almost literally the truth, and I appeal to any traveller from this country, who may have taken the trouble to inquire about the state of religion in France, for the truth of his assertions and of his representations. So great is the disrespect in which the French Papist clergy are held by their countrymen, that no one of any qualifications by which he could earn a subsistence in any other way, would become one. The lame, the crippled, the stammerer, those who have not the spirit, or who are not able to earn, a subsistence by labour, in fine, those of the lowest grades in society, compose the greater number of the modern French clergy. If there be any thing

like Christianity in France, it is to be found only among the few Protestants scattered through the country, and not, by any means, among the Roman Catholic population. A great many of the latter, pass through life without any sense of religion, and totally ignorant of the first principles of Christianity. The Roman Catholic churches, though opened for form-sake every day, are almost empty, there being many Frenchmen, who never saw the inside of a church, even through curiosity, during a long life. With some classes, infidelity is no longer the fashion. These make a show of religion, because they are unwilling to be thought unbelievers; yet, if their creed be examined, they will be found to have as little belief in the doctrines of Christianity, as those who make open profession of infidelity. The prevalent opinion among all classes is, that when a man dies, there is an end to him. They believe not in the immortality of the soul, yet some, to keep up the appearance of religion, are not unobservant of popish superstitions. There have always been Protestants at Lyons, St. Etienne and Chalons; but their intercourse with Roman Catholics has plunged them into the same state of irreligion as the latter, so that they retain nothing of Protestants but the name. They are nearly as far gone in infidelity as their popish fellow-countrymen, and have the same disregard for the religious education of their children. The Protestants of Lyons were wholly Socinians till within a few years back. The theological colleges, in which the pastors are educated, though very effective as far as learning goes, inculcate the Arian doctrines. When the divinity of the Saviour is denied, a disregard for the incalculable importance of his mission necessarily follows. An indifference about the gospel comes next, and from this the transition to absolute infidelity is very easy. Most

French Protestants, have been brought up in early life without any worship at all, and thereby becoming almost all pure rationalists, they countenance the church, more because they cannot do without the rites of marriage, baptism, and sepulture, than for any more cogent reasons.

In the year 1826, on the occasion of the law of sacrilege being promulgated in France, fifteen hundred Roman Catholics abandoned popery and attached themselves to the Protestant church of France—that is, to Arianism. The greater part of these returned to popery before the expiration of a year, and it would be a great wonder if they had not; for surely a religion so flattering to human nature as popery is, which lulls the conscience to sleep, and satisfies the religious propensities without taxing it, must have appeared infinitely preferable to the common-place morality and frigid worship of those who deny the fundamental doctrine of Christianity—the divinity of its founder; which, if it be not *a sine qua non*, an essential article of a Christian's belief, Christianity itself is nothing better than a cunningly devised fable, put together to answer the purposes of designing men. The Protestant religion is reviving in France very much within these two years. Evangelical churches are established in many of the principal cities, and even Lyons itself, as much the hot-bed of Ariänism as Geneva, has now to glory in no small number of devoted, pious Christians. These with their minister were expelled from the only house of Protestant worship that existed at Lyons; but they met afterwards in private houses, and continued to do so, till their numbers increased, and they had been able to raise sufficient funds to build a church for themselves. They have now one large enough to contain the primitive flock, and also those

who, attracted by the force of gospel truth, are daily uniting themselves to them, and deserting from the ranks of popery, Arianism, and infidelity.

### CHAPTER III.

Arrival at Rome—Cardinal Micara, General of the Capuchins—How received by him—The Lay-brother cicerone—In what department of curiosities he excelled—Removal to Frascati—Description of Frascati and its environs—Reception—The English not Christians—How explained—Italian civility to strangers—Taking the habit—Ceremonies used on that occasion.

It is foreign to the design of the present work to give an account of my journey, and a description of the different countries through which I passed on the route from Paris to Rome. Be it sufficient, then, to state, that I arrived in the latter city in about three months after my departure from Ireland. The journey is generally made in twenty days by those who are travelling on urgent business, but mine not being of that stamp, I stopped for some days in the different towns on the road. I rested five or six days at Turin, the first Italian town met with after descending from the Alps—and the capital of Piedmont. The road afterwards lay through Alexandria, Genoa, Leghorn, Florence, &c., in each of which towns I remained some few days. Upon my arrival at Rome, I presented my letters and other credentials to the general of the Capuchins, who was just created a cardinal a few weeks before my arrival, by Leo XII., the then reigning pontiff. I believe he is still living, or, at least, was about six months ago. His name is Cardinal Micara, a native



of Frascati, and esteemed the most learned theologian of Rome. He is easily distinguished from the other cardinals, on account of his wearing a long, shaggy beard, and mustaches, of which he seems to be very proud. I was received by him with very great kindness. He ordered a room to be immediately prepared for me in the convent, which I was to occupy during my stay at Rome; giving me, at the same time, to understand, that it was necessary for me to proceed to Frascati—the ancient Tusculum—to serve my novitiate. He, however, allowed me the space of three weeks to see Rome and its curiosities before my departure; giving orders to one of the lay-brothers to accompany me to the different places I wished to see. My lay-brother, however, proved a bad cicerone; for, although a Roman by birth, he knew as much about the real curiosities of ancient or modern Rome as a native of Otaheite. I had a great desire to see some of those places, which were rendered familiar to me by reading the Roman classics, but of these, alas! my cicerone knew as much as the man in the moon. He made ample amends, however, for his ignorance of those things by an extensive knowledge of all the miraculous images of the Madonna, of the different crucifixes, of the relics of the saints, of the churches, where so many days' indulgences may be obtained, and the redemption of so many souls from purgatory, and all for the trouble of reciting a "pater noster."—But of these things, more in the sequel. After having seen a few churches, and some miracle-working relics, I grew tired; and having purchased "The Stranger's Guide through Rome," I sallied forth alone, and by the help of it, satisfied in some degree my curiosity.

The time allowed me for the gratification of my curiosity being now expired, I was summoned one

morning very early to the presence of his eminence, the cardinal. He received me with his usual kindness, and laughed very heartily when I related to him in French, which he spoke very fluently, the *ciceronic* lay-brother's want of knowledge in Roman antiquities. He told me, that I would have time enough to examine Rome, both ancient and modern, after my year's novitiate was ended, and that, until then, I should go to Frascati, and put on the seraphic habit—so the Franciscan habit is called. He earnestly advised me to apply myself to the study of Italian, and gave me an Italian grammar, and an Anglo-Italian dictionary, for that purpose. Holding out his hand to be kissed, and giving me his benediction, he then dismissed me, telling me to hold myself in readiness for my departure at four o'clock that same evening. The distance from Rome to Frascati, being only twelve miles, I soon arrived there; having already made up my mind to persevere in the primary intention, for which I had left my own country, whatever might be the consequence, or whatever the difficulties I should have to contend with. As Frascati and its neighbourhood was the scene of many of the occurrences which will be hereafter related, it may not be thought irrelative to give a hasty description of them.

Frascati is situated in the Campagna di Roma, about twelve miles distant from the holy city. It is built nearly on the site of the ancient Tusculum, so well known as the place in which Cicero wrote his "*Questiones Tusculanæ*." The ruins of Tusculum, which are still extant, are about two miles from the modern city, yet it is supposed that the former, in the time of its ancient splendour, extended as far as the plain, in which the latter is now built. It commands a fine view of the surrounding country, especially from the Capuchin convent—the one in

which I resided. There are in its immediate neighbourhood several splendid villas belonging to the Roman nobility, the principal of which are *il palazzo Borghese*, belonging to the prince of that name, who seldom or never lives in it; *il palazzo Falconieri*, which is let out as a summer residence to English travellers, or to any other foreigners that are willing to pay for it; and the *Rofanello*, the late residence of Lucien Buonaparte for a number of years. At the distance of eight miles towards the Apennines is placed Tivoli, which, whatever may have been its grandeur in the time of Roman greatness, is now but an insignificant village. On the same direction, but nearer to Frascati, is the town called after the family of the Porzia, “Monte Porzio,” so abominably filthy, that the inhabitants themselves, punning on the name, call it “*monte dei porci*”—*pig-mountain*. On the other side of Frascati, and towards the sea, are *Rocca di Papa*, *Rocca Priore*, *Monte Competri*—all insignificant villages, and distinguished for nothing but dirt and monasteries—one of which, very celebrated, is built on the top of a high mountain overhanging the village of Rocca di Papa. It belongs to the *frati della passione*, or *passion-monks*, so called from their wearing on their habits a picture representing the passion of Christ. Would it not be better, and more scriptural, for them to have Christ’s passion imprinted on their hearts?—But they think otherwise.

Having presented the general’s letter to the local superior of Frascati, I was admitted into the convent under the character of a *postulante*—a name given to those who, not being yet dressed in the habit, wish to be sure whether their vocation would continue after having observed more closely the manners and customs of the monks. I saw nothing during the time—about two months—

I remained in this way, which could cause me to repent of my undertaking, or deter me from embracing the order. On the contrary, every thing seemed carried on according to the strictest rules of propriety. I was treated by the superior and the other monks with very great kindness and attention, approaching almost to affection; the former frequently taking me as his *umbra*, or *shade*, to dine at some gentleman's house, of which he was the spiritual director; whilst the latter almost daily accompanied me through the villas and palaces of the neighbourhood, to all of which they had a free and easy access, by reason of their monastic profession and the respect paid to it. In this way, two months passed over very agreeably, and, at the end of that time, my desire of joining the order was more ardent than before. The Italians in general are very obliging to strangers, especially to those strangers from whom they expect some advantage. The Italian monks are particularly so to those coming to unite themselves to their order, especially if they be foreigners; for it is thought, that it adds to the respectability of the order, and gives it distinction in the eyes of the public, to have a great number of foreigners attached to it. The hope, also, of establishing convents, and propagating the Roman Catholic religion through their means in foreign parts, may be another motive for treating foreigners with more than usual kindness. It was a long time since the order counted any students from that *heretical country*, England, (as they generally call it,) among its numbers, and therefore it fell to my lot to be looked upon with more than usual interest. The superior once inquired of me, if my father and mother were Christians?—a question which somewhat startled me, but which he afterwards modified, by asking, if they were Roman Catholics? I was not then



aware that no Protestants, and more especially, no English Protestants, whom they honour so far as to call the "*worst of heretics*," were esteemed by them Christians. I answered in the affirmative. He then inquired closely into the state of the Roman Catholic religion in England and Ireland, and of the number of monasteries in those countries; wondering very much that so very few young men came from Ireland now-a-days to join his order; whereas, when he was a young man, and in the beginning of his ecclesiastical career—he was at this time about fifty-five—there were a great many young Irishmen his fellow-students at Rome. He lamented, with appearance of great grief, the falling off of that once holy kingdom—the *insula sanctorum*—from the true faith, through the apostacy (as he termed it) of Henry VIII., and of Anna Boleyn. He then, turning to the other monks, who stood listening with open mouths, related the old thread-bare story of the conversion of England by Austin, the monk, who was sent thither by the then *Holy Father* (the pope) Gregory; not forgetting the equally old story of Venerable Bede's, about "*non Angli, sed angeli, si tantum Christiani fuissent*"—"not English, but angels, if they were but Christians"—which must be familiar to every reader.

The time for my taking the habit now drew nigh, and, it being rumoured through the town, that an Englishman was about to become a novice in the Capuchin order, the church was crowded to excess on the day appointed. The evening before, I made a general confession of the sins of my whole life to the superior, and was directed to look to the Madonna and entreat her intercession, in order to have the absolution, pronounced by him, the *unworthy minister* of God, (his own words) here on earth, ratified in Heaven. The ceremonies usually practised

on giving the habit to a novice, having in them something that may appear strange to the generality of readers in this country, it will not be thought foreign to the subject to describe them.

The superior, having put on the vestments used for celebrating mass, comes to the altar, attended by a deacon, subdeacon, and acolothists, and addresses the congregation, stating the occasion of the ceremony and perhaps also giving (as he did in my case) a brief history of the postulant. He then endeavours to draw a moral from the history and to hold up the subject of it, as one worthy of imitation. After this he begins the mass, and proceeds with it as far as the Gospel, when the postulant is brought forward by the deacon, dressed in as gaudy attire, as can be procured for the occasion. The postulant prostrates himself at the foot of the altar, and at the feet of the superior, who bids him, in Latin, to arise and proclaim aloud what he wanted from the church of God. The questions and answers, used on this occasion, and of which the novice is warned beforehand, are here subjoined in the original Latin, with a literal translation for the satisfaction of those, who do not understand that language:

*Ques.* Quid petis ab ecclesia Dei?

*Res.* Habitum Sancti Francisci.

*Ques.* Quare habitum Sancti Francisci petis?

*Res.* Ut animam salvem.

*Ques.* Quis te excitavit mundum fugere, et teipsum Deo sub regula Sancti Francisci vovere?

*Res.* Nullus ab externo: sed tantum sponte, Spiritu Sancto cooperante, hujus mundi pericula vidi, et ut ea facilius fugerem, sub regula Sancti Francisci militare volo.

Translation of the foregoing.

*Ques.* What do you seek from the church of God?

*An.* The habit of Saint Francis!

*Ques.* Why do you seek the habit of St. Francis?

*An.* In order to save my soul.

*Ques.* What has excited you to flee from the world, and to dedicate yourself to God under the rule of St. Francis?

*An.* Nothing outwardly: but of my own accord, and through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, I have seen the dangers of the world, and in order to more easily escape them, I wish to be a soldier under the rule of St. Francis.

The postulant is then stripped of his finery by the deacon and attendants, whilst the habit with which he is about to be clad, is placed before the superior on a silver salver, in order to be blessed by him and sprinkled with holy water. The blessing of the habit, which takes up five or six minutes, being finished, it is then handed over to the deacon, who puts it over the head and shoulders of the postulant, who kneels down to receive it, in token of greater devotion; the superior in the mean time repeating the following: *Sancti Francisci habitus ab omni Diaboli impetu te custodiat!* May the habit of St. Francis guard you from all attacks of the Devil. Then a cord, of about half an inch in diameter, is produced, which after having gone through the form of being blessed, is tied around the sides of the novice; the superior repeating these words: *Sancti Francisci cingula te ab omni libidine custodiat, et te faciat castum anima et corpore.* May the girdle or cord of St. Francis guard you from lust, and render you chaste in soul and body—to all which prayers, the attendants answer—Amen. The mass is then continued, till after the communion, when the novice is again brought forward by the deacon to receive the sacrament,

which he does from the hands, or rather the fingers of the superior, who says, whilst in the act of putting the wafer into his mouth: *Corpus Domini nostri, Jesu Christi, custodiat animam tuam in vitam eternam.*—*Amen.* May the body of our Lord Jesus Christ keep your soul for eternal life. *Amen.* The mass is, after this, finished, and the choir chaunt the psalm "*Ecce quam bonum, et quam jucundum habitare, fratres, in unum.*" Behold! what a pleasing, and virtuous thing it is, brothers, to live together; whilst the newly vested novice is receiving the kiss of peace from his future brethren, who say, whilst kissing him "*Pax tibi, frater charissime*"—peace be with you, dearest brother. The day of giving the habit to a novice is observed by the monks as a day of feasting and rejoicing. A sumptuous dinner is prepared for the occasion, and the friends and benefactors of the convent are invited to partake of it. The monks exercise their talents for poetry by composing some pieces to be recited in the refectory during dinner, in praise of a monastic life, or in praise of the novice. Thus the day passes over amidst mirth and feasting, whilst the new-made monk retires to his room, fully content with his condition, and enthusiastic in his admiration of the manner of life he had that day chosen. Happy for him, if he continue so, or if he repent not before the expiration of a few months!



## CHAPTER IV.

Rule of St. Francis—Reasons for being unable to obtain a sight of it before receiving the Habit—Tradition attached to it—Francis' conversation with the miraculous Crucifix—Pope Honorius—Canonically elected popes—Infallibility—Lents—Wonderful change of flesh—meat into fish.

BEING now clad in the livery of St. Francis, a book containing the rules, and constitutions of the order was placed at my disposal. Such a book, I often before wished to see, and even begged a loan of it, more than once, from the superior, but my request, though not flatly refused, was always evaded. They never show—such is their policy—the rules of the order to the uninitiated, or to those not clad in their habit, fearing I suppose, that they might be injured in the public estimation, if the public became aware of the little harmony there is existing between what they are, and what they ought to be, if they practised the rules laid down by their founder Francis. Be this as it may, I never could get a sight of the book containing these rules, until a few days after I had taken the habit, and when the monks well knew, in the event of my not liking them, that I had gone too far to retract with honor, though indeed I was still at liberty, and would be so for one year yet to come, until the day of my solemn profession, to retire from the order.

There is a tradition attached to this book of rules, which will occasion a smile on the countenance of the reader. This is it: St. Francis, whilst fleeing from his father, who was very unwilling that his son should become a saint, retired for concealment to a

mountain in the neighbourhood of Assisi, his native town. There he engaged in prayer and fasting for the space of forty days, say some, four only, say others—but it is all the same, there being as much truth in one, as in the other. At the end of the forty, or four days, the crucifix before which he knelt, disengaging one of its hands from the wood to which it was nailed, suddenly became animated, and began to harangue Francis and commanded him to institute an order, for which a rule had been written in Heaven. An angel then appeared, and depositing a book in the hands of the crucifix again vanished. The crucifix then stretched out and delivered the book to Francis, and immediately returned to its former position—an inanimate piece of wood. The foregoing story, carrying, as it does in itself, its own contradiction, is, nevertheless, often made the subject of a sermon in the Franciscan pulpits; and so eagerly is the marvellous swallowed by a superstitious, uneducated peasantry, it has been the cause of bringing a great deal of wealth to the order, and of extolling it in the eyes of the public. It is frequently related in the confessional, (where I for the first time heard it) by the monks to their penitents, and it is often believed by the narrators themselves, in the same way as habitual liars sometimes believe their own falsehoods. To such pious frauds as this do men resort in order to aggrandize themselves and their order—men too, who are under a solemn vow to despise the world, and even its most harmless pleasures, and to give themselves up entirely to the salvation of the souls of others and of their own.

The rule of which we are speaking, was originally written in Italian, and then, after some years, turned into monkish Latin, so barbarous, that it evidently shows, whatever be Francis' claims for the

title of a saint, he had very little—indeed none at all, for that of a scholar. It is indeed a curious specimen of composition, whether regarded in a literary or in a moral light. I am sorry, that I have not a copy of it by me to make some extracts from, having unfortunately lost the one I had. The extracts, which I am about to give, will be understood therefore, as drawn entirely from memory. It begins with the bull of Honorius III, the then reigning pope, confirming the order of the Friars Minor, the name, which through humility the Franciscans first assumed. Nor did this show of humility want its due portion of policy. Francis and his companions were well aware, that the success of the order would be much injured, if they excited in the beginning the jealousy of the Benedictines, Augustinians, Carmelites, &c., all long established and powerful orders. To give no open cause then for their jealousy, they very prudently accomplished by a show of humility, what they were well aware never could be brought about by open defiance. They therefore called themselves Minor-friars, or Friar-minors. Little did the other orders then imagine, that the poor, sheepish-looking Francis had more real cunning than his outward deportment would warrant, and that he was about to institute an order, which like bad weeds in a garden, would soon spread itself through all Europe. Little did they imagine, that his followers would soon dispossess them of their pulpits, and of their chairs of theology and transfer in the end to themselves that veneration, in which they were held by the people. But who can dive into futurity? Not even monks, however *thaumaturgi*, or miracle-workers they may be!

We have seen, that the rule begins with the *confirmation* of the order by the then reigning pope, Honorius III. How that pope was brought to sanc-

tion the ravings of a man, who, by any person of sense, would be thought a madman, has connected with it another ridiculous story, which I shall take the liberty to mention here. It shows the pitiable stratagems, to which Francis and the pope too, as if an abettor, had recourse; each, to consolidate his own authority—the one, the authority over his particular followers, as their founder—the other, the authority, or at least, an argument in favor of that authority over the whole Christian world, as vicar of Christ. It seems, that in a second interview, which Francis had with the animated crucifix, he was ordered to set out immediately for Rome, “and”—(Christ is blasphemously made the speaker,) “throwing thyself at the feet of *my vicar*, whom I have already prepared for thy coming, demand a confirmation of the rule, which I have given thee.” So saying, the crucifix remained silent. Francis, without the least hesitation, immediately set out for Rome, where arrived, he presented himself before the pontiff, who instantly embraced him to the great surprise of the Cardinals and his other attendants. The pope then related the vision which he had seen the preceding night. “As I lay on my knees,” said he, “after midnight, deeply engaged in prayer before the image of my Saviour, and supplicating him to inspire me with sufficient strength and prudence for the government of His holy church; behold, I saw in a vision, though broad awake, the church of St. John Lateran tottering, and this man—(pointing towards Francis on his knees) dressed in the same habit, in which he appears before us now, supporting it with all his might, whilst in characters of fire were written over his head the words ‘*Vade, repara domum meam*’—‘Go, and repair my house.’” Francis then related his conversation with the crucifix, and the command which he had received to



proceed to Rome, and get his rule which was written in Heaven, confirmed on earth by *the vicar of Jesus Christ*. The confirmation, as may well be supposed, met with no obstacle, and thus was a beginning given to the Franciscan order. The foregoing stories, ridiculous as they certainly are, and many others still more ridiculous and equally marvellous, are to be found in the life of St. Francis, written by one of his followers. Let the reader then give them that degree of credence, which he may deem them worthy of. The subject of the latter one is made the escutcheon engraved on the vicar-general's seal, of which I have an impression in my possession—St. Francis, holding his shoulder against the falling church of St. John Lateran, and the words “vade, repara domum meam” written over his head.

The rule then continues to lay down certain regulations to be observed under pain of mortal sin by all those professed in the order. The principal one, and that upon which all the rest are based, is a blind, servile obedience to the reigning pope and his successors *canonically elected*. Now, the clause “canonically elected” is rather vague in its signification, and probably Francis, simple as he may appear to his co-visionary, pope Honorius, suspected that popes were not always elected according to the canons. He therefore very honestly gives his followers the liberty of choosing between contending popes, or of remaining neutral, not acknowledging any pope at all, till they see to whom fortune or superior interest, disguised under the name of the “*Holy Ghost*” would finally give the popedom. The scandalous contentions for the popedom—a manifest sign, that the Holy Spirit, though formally invoked, has very little influence in the election—are so well known to every reader, that it is needless to make particu-

lar mention of them here. The contentions for that dignity, when the holy see was transferred to Avignon, and when there existed at one and the same time three popes, excommunicating and damning one another, may serve as an example of the infallibility of the infallible men, who are elected to it. *Three infallibles* at one and the same time, and each condemning the *infallible* bulls and edicts, promulgated by his infallible opponents! Strange indeed, but such is popery.

In another chapter, it lays down the number of lents to be observed in the year, and the manner, in which these lents are to be observed. The lents are three: one of seven weeks, observed, or at least commanded to be observed by the whole Romish church; though such a command, I am glad to see, is meeting with deserved neglect in most parts of Europe, except Ireland, and there also, among the educated classes of Roman Catholics—so true it is, that education is the bane of popery, and where the former prevails, the latter is put to flight, for it is as easy to unite fire and water as information and popery.

The second of two months from All Saint's day, 1st of November, to Christmas, called by the monks, "*la quaresima di merito*," or the meritorious lent. The third of 40 days, which begins some days after the Epiphany. This last is called "*la quaresima benedetta*," or the blessed lent, because Francis did not command it to be observed under pain of mortal sin, but yet left his blessing to those who observe it. Thus is fasting, though neither good nor bad in itself, rendered by this madman execrable, as being made the means of acquiring merit, and thereby salvation, whilst the blessed doctrine of obtaining it through the vicarious atonement, and merits of Christ, is not once thought upon. The rigour with which lent should be observed, is perhaps intended

to be pointed out by the following story, related in the life of St. Francis:

One day in lent, Francis and his companion were travelling—on foot to be sure—in the province of Umbria, for the purpose of founding convents. They were fasting all that day, nor would they partake of any food, lest they should break through the holy fast, though frequently invited to do so by those upon whom they called in the way of business. Evening drawing nigh, they were obliged to take up their lodgings at the house of a vicious nobleman, who, however, he may conceal it, was a secret enemy of Francis and his institute. At supper, there was nothing placed upon the table before the holy man and his companion but flesh-meat. The companion looked towards his master to see how he should act, and his hair stood on end with astonishment, when he *positively* saw him eating, what was set before him. Knowing, however, that the saint never acted without good reasons, he said nothing, but silently imitated the example given him. His host, who stood on the watch with some of his vicious companions, immediately burst out into laughter, and called in his neighbors to expose the hypocrite; as he called the holy man. Francis, not in the least disturbed, made the sign of the cross on the table, and in the twinkling of an eye, the meat—capons, turkeys and all—was turned into herrings; and even the bones of what he had already eaten, became bones of fish! This was a miracle indeed! But some monks have nothing else to do than inventing such trash. The story is made, however, to serve its own purposes. It impresses the necessity of abstaining from certain meats during a certain time, in order to obtain favour with God, and strengthens that necessity by bringing Francis, whom all acknowledge a saint, forward as

an example. This is nothing else but preaching the antiscryptural doctrine of the distinction of meats, so fondly adhered to by the church of Rome, and the bringing of Francis on the stage, is but showing an example of obedience to that doctrine. Again, the miracle of changing flesh meat into herrings, is but proving by a miracle, how acceptable such a doctrine is to God.

## CHAPTER V.

Continuation of the Rule—Monkish Vow of Poverty—How observed—Anecdote of a Carmelite—Masses—Obedience—Education of Novices—An Ass turned into an Ox—The Tree of Obedience.

IN another chapter of the book of rules, the friars are not only exhorted, but positively commanded “*to have neither lands nor houses, nor money, either in common or for individual use—but to depend entirely on the charity of the faithful for subsistence.*” They are commanded to go “*from door to door*” (*da uscio in uscio*, are the express words of Francis,) “*begging—not money, which they are prohibited from touching, but—provisions.*” This part of the rule is now entirely disregarded, and was, from the very beginning of the Franciscan institute, and in the days of Francis himself—a pretty sample of obedience to the precepts of a rule, which he impiously gave out to be written by God himself. It is well known, that no people are so fond of money as monks, and none make so little use of it for the good of society in general. Absolute poverty, which they swear, yes, solemnly



swear to observe, and live in, is openly and in the face of the public set at naught; most convents having lands and rents attached to them for their support. Thus is the command at once broken through by them, considered as a community or body. The latter part—that of “begging from door to door—for provisions”—is indeed observed in part, and only in part, for they take money, if offered. It is continued chiefly more for the purpose of giving the world an idea of their poverty and humility, than through any absolute want they feel of such assistance. They have also a good income—paid always in money, mind—from the many masses daily celebrated in their churches according to the intention of the highest bidder. The atonement of Christ set up for auction! mark that, reader. These masses are mostly said in aid of the souls in purgatory, which, whatever it be as a place of punishment to its inmates, is certainly the source of many enjoyments to its turnkeys, and has been justly called the pope’s bank—a bank indeed, which will never stop payment as long as the reign of superstition lasts. Masses are often said likewise according to the intention of some swindler and assassin, who wishes to implore God’s blessing on his nefarious undertakings. Some sincere, though mistaken believers in their efficacy, also pay for masses to be said for some virtuous intention; but these are rare cases, and if monks depended upon their frequent occurrence for support, they would soon be obliged to shut up shop.

Much as monks, considered as a community, transgress the vow of poverty, they transgress it still more, individually. There are few, very few indeed, among them, who have not each his own private purse, which is often applied to uses that would not bear examination. Some over-scrupulous, and yet unwilling to forfeit the gratifications, which money

can procure, cover their hands with two or three pairs of gloves, whilst using it, in order to evade the law, which simply says, "*fratres pecuniam non attingant*"—let friars not touch money. Thus they endeavour to stifle the voice of conscience by never touching it with their naked fingers, and think, that they have satisfied the law, if they blindfold the d—l in the dark—This way of getting over a difficulty or of interpreting a command in one's own favour, is similar to that of the Carmelite's, who not being allowed by the rules of his order to eat meat within the convent, though he may without, thrust his head and part of his body out of the window, and in that position devoured a whole fowl. There are others, who go in a more open way to work; those who apply to the pope for a brief by which they may be empowered to keep money, on payment of a certain sum to his Holiness; but the greater part never trouble their heads about either pope or bishop's leave, and keep as much money as they can come at. Indeed, a monk's conscience becomes larger and larger every day, till at last, being entirely worn out, it bursts and stops at nothing.

I shall mention the contents of one more chapter of this rule, and make a few remarks thereon, and then be done with it. *Blind, servile obedience to the local and general superiors of the order*, is insisted upon and commanded to be strictly observed by the rule of St. Francis. This is made an essential point in the character of a good monk, and on this, according to monkish moralists, all other virtues depend. Obedience, indeed, considered in relation to God, or to parents, or to those who have any lawful power to command it from us, is certainly a virtue; but when it extends itself to the performance of things, which are little in unison with Gospel morality, it must certainly, whatever monkish

moralists say to the contrary, lose in a great measure its good effects. Thus the superior of a monastery will command one of his subjects to preach a funeral sermon over the corpse of one, whose whole life was one continued round of vice and immorality. The convent will gain something by it, and the subject of course must obey his superior. He then in that very pulpit designed for spreading the truths of the Gospel—though a monastic pulpit is seldom used for that purpose—must praise the virtues and piety of the deceased, and with an unblushing disregard for truth, must attribute to him some noble actions, of which he was never guilty; having been on the contrary, the scandal and rock of offence to the whole neighbourhood. How then will the preacher excuse himself to his own conscience for this unworthy prostitution of his oratory? Why, by simply thinking that his vow of obedience compelled him to it, and instead of fearing God's indignation, he places it among the bundle of his merits, to be presented at his death as a passport to heaven; for it is an axiom with them, that the more difficult the command, the greater is the merit of obeying it. Again, if a subject be commanded by his superior to attend at the last moments of a dying rich man—and this is an every day occurrence—and to endeavour to prevail upon him, whilst in that feeble state of mind and body, to bequeath his wealth, or the greater portion of it to the monastery for the good of his soul; the subject dare not disobey, though he is well aware, that the favourable issue of his commission will tend to the injury of the children and other near relatives of the dying man. He only works in his vocation, leaving to those whom he obeys, to reconcile the act to the strict rules of equity and justice; and perhaps, he excuses himself in

the words of Falstaff—"it is my vocation, it is no sin for a man to work at his vocation."

This blind obedience to the will of the superiors is more than any thing else dwelt upon in the education of novices. From the moment they take the habit, they are led by degrees to lose the exercise of their free will, and of the innate power of judging between *fus* and *nefus*—right and wrong. They are taught to consider an action essentially bad in itself as meritorious, when sanctioned by the command of the superior. Their instructors, however, take good care not to wound all at once their natural sense of propriety, but conduct them insensibly, and without their perceiving it, to make a sacrifice of their judgment. They at first command only trifling things, and such as are of no moment; things indifferent in themselves, and neither bad nor good. Thus, one is commanded to plant some cabbages in the garden with the roots upwards; another, to stick in the ground a piece of dry, rotten wood, and water it so many times a day, as if it were a living plant—a duty I performed myself for nearly one fortnight; another is ordered to pronounce so many Latin words contrary to the received and established rules of prosody, as *legère* for *legêre*, *domînus* for *domînus*, *epistôla* for *epistôla*, and so on. The novices are in this way brought by degrees to accustom themselves to be guided by others, and to perform the will of their superior in every thing, till at last they become as pieces of wax in the hands of a saint-maker, who is at liberty to make of it a Gesù Bambino, a Madonna, or a de—il, as it may best answer his purpose. Nor are there wanting legends and tales, to more forcibly impress on the mind the merit of obedience. Out of thousands I will select one or two. St. Francis, walking one day in company with one of his novices, saw, on the side of the road,



an ass feeding. "Is not that a fine ox," said he to his companion; "and how ought we to be thankful to God for his goodness in bestowing on us such auxiliaries to help us on in our labours." The novice looked towards the hedge, and saw—not an ox, but—an ass, endeavouring to satisfy his appetite on a meal of thistles. Thinking that the saint, in his simplicity, really mistook an ass for an ox, whilst the holy patriarch was only trying his obedience, he took the liberty to inform him of his mistake. The saint, however, chided him for his pains, and telling him to look again, lo! the ass was in an instant transformed into a beautiful and strong ox. The novice now threw himself at the saint's feet, humbly imploring his forgiveness, for having dared to think or see any thing, but in the way that he, his superior, thought, or saw it: the man of God, after reading him a lecture on submitting even his senses to the authority of his superiors, raised him up, and took him again into favour, on his promising never to believe his own eyes again.

There is another legend, by which the merit of blind obedience is impressed upon the minds of novices, and which, having some likeness to the task I myself had to perform—that of watering a dry stick thrust into the ground—may not be found uninteresting. It is the following:

In the garden of the convent of Capuchins at Alatri—a town of the papal states situated in the Campagna di Roma—there is a fine fig-tree, which every year produces abundance of delicious fruit. The tradition attached to this tree forms the subject of the legend. A young man, of most libertine principles, who had passed through every stage of vice which is practised in a sinful world, being obliged to flee from Rome, on account of having wounded

in a duel one of the companions of his debauchery, took refuge in the convent, till the powerful interest of his relations—he being of a noble family—could procure his pardon. In the mean time he was a diligent observer of the piety and sanctity of the monks, (so says the annalist—a monk, to be sure,) and at last came to the resolution of renouncing the world altogether, and of serving God under the rule of St. Francis. With this intention, he sought the superior, and, with tears in his eyes, begged to be received as a novice. The superior, in order to try his vocation, angrily repulsed him, and said, that such an infamous wretch as he was not worthy to be classed among the followers of the holy patriarch. But this refusal served only to excite his desire the more—and he again and again renewed his petition. The superior, seeing his constancy, at length consented; fearing, that if he resisted any longer, he would be acting against the divine impulse that so strongly excited the young man to forsake the world and its vanities. He was received as a novice. His master-novice, in order to exercise him in obedience, commanded him to take from the fire a half-burnt piece of wood, and plant it in the garden, at a quarter of a mile's distance from the well, whence he was to draw water to water it three times every day. It happened, that the piece of wood was a part of a fig-tree, and—remark the fruits of obedience—the half-burnt stick took root, and grew into the beautiful tree which is to be seen to this day in the garden of the Allatri convent. It is now called by the monks, and other inhabitants of the town, “*l'albore della ubbidenza*,” or the tree of obedience. Such ridiculous stories as these are made the means of rendering the unfortunate victims of monkery, the willing agents for upholding the doctrines of the Romish church, and of placing

them as tools in the hands of the more cunning, for executing their own private views, and for leading astray, from the road to salvation, the minds of a superstitious peasantry.

## CHAPTER VI.

What excited Francis to found his order—Benedictines—Santoni—State of the religious orders in the thirteenth century—State of the people—Francis' ambition.

It will not be thought foreign to the present subject to make a few remarks on the reasons which first excited Francis to institute his order. They were chiefly these: the indolent, lazy, inactive life of the other monkish orders—the superstition of the age in which he lived (the beginning of the thirteenth century) and which he well knew, would receive with applause any appeal to its notions of religion—and the fire of ambition burning in his bosom, and strongly driving him on to distinguish himself by becoming founder of a monastic order. On looking into the state of the monastic orders of Francis' days, we cannot help observing, that the greater part of them fell away from their primitive institute. The Benedictines, founded many centuries before by Benedict—another fanatic—were fast falling into the disrepute they so justly merited, for their slothful, indolent, and vicious lives. Benedict's intention was, that his followers should lead an ascetic life, wholly secluded from the world, and that their monasteries should be built far from any populous city. This regulation, which was doubtless intended by their founder as a preventive against secular

ambition, very soon became inadequate to the accomplishment of that purpose. By degrees, riches flowed into them, and their primitive frugality was then soon at an end. They became masters of the land for miles in the neighbourhood of their monasteries, and all the peasantry thereon became slaves to their clerical masters, who exercised the power of life and death over them. The monasteries soon became fortified castles; it being no unusual sight to see mitred abbots, with the crozier in one hand, and the sword in the other, leading on their vassals against some secular lord, from whom they had received, or imagined to have received, some insult. These petty brawls were the only disturbances which aroused them from their beloved indolence; for, at other times, their lives were chiefly spent in *feasting*—not *fasting*; and in mumbling over some Latin prayers, which the greater part of them did not understand. Many people are under the impression, that the world is much indebted to the Benedictines for the care they took in preserving and transcribing many valuable books, which, were it not for them, would scarcely have come down to us. That some books were preserved in their monasteries, especially in those belonging to the congregation of St. Maure, cannot be denied; but did they endeavour to instruct the people in general to use such books? Quite the contrary has been the case. It was their interest to keep the people in ignorance, in order to maintain their own influence over them; and as he was thought a learned man in those days who could read and write, so the monks were looked upon as superior beings, who were masters of these extraordinary qualifications. The bulls issued by the reigning popes of that period speak volumes as to the ignorant state of the people in general, and more particularly, of the ignorant



state of the vassals of the church. These bulls loudly complain, that the peasantry living on the estates of most abbeys, were ignorant of the first rudiments of Christianity. The monks, indeed, took very little trouble to teach them any thing at all, but when they did, it consisted in repeating pater noster and ave Marias, and some other Latin prayers to the Virgin and saints. When they preached, the subject was not the way of salvation, as pointed out in the revealed Word, but some miracle or life of a saint chosen from their order. Thus, the world, all things considered, does not lie under such obligations to the Benedictines as their advocates would lead us to believe; for truly, had they never existed, or had they taken more pains to instruct the people, the reign of barbarism and Vandalic ignorance would not so long have afflicted the human race.

The other orders, including the Augustinians, Carmelites, and their different ramifications, were on a par, both in utility and morality, with the Benedictines. The people, though uneducated, could, however, judge of the evil effects naturally flowing from the monkish system, and were ripe for shaking off the galling yoke of their clerical rulers, as soon as they could find a favourable opportunity. The veneration in which monks were held began to sensibly decrease, and the people by degrees gave less credence to their stories of prodigies and holiness, which were so contradictory to the known tenor of their lives. They began to look around for some one, that, making himself one of themselves, would both flatter their passion for the marvellous, and free them from the proud domination of mitred abbots. Every fool, who had not the wit or the means of living in the society of his neighbours, found immediate support by wandering about the country in the assumed character of a *santone*, or *huge saint*.

His poverty, and the filthiness of his rags, were considered, by a superstitious peasantry, as evident signs of superior holiness, and the miracles and visions which he pretended to have seen, were listened to with open mouths. The idea, that their lordly masters, the Benedictines and others, could alone be acceptable to God, or could alone perform miracles, began to wear away fast, and there was wanting only a *santone* more cunning than the rest to fix their veneration on himself alone, and on his followers, and to withdraw it altogether from their sanctified tyrants. Such a one was presented to them in the person of Francis.

Francis long since was aware of the decline of Benedictine influence, and not having the talents to distinguish himself in any secular profession, and, like the man that burned the temple of Diana at Ephesus, being ambitious to immortalise his name—no matter how—thought that a favourable opportunity now presented itself of arriving at that object. He therefore dressed himself in tattered rags, and, barefooted, wandered about the country, feigning a most sanctified deportment, and relating the wonders and visions with which he was favoured. He silently and patiently suffered the insults, and even the blows of those who were sent by the lordly Benedictines to drive him from the neighbourhood of their monasteries; for, conscious of their declining influence over the minds of the people, they rightly judged that he, and other vagabond saints of his stamp, were the cause of it, by placing their meekness, poverty, and show of sanctity, in the face of their own pride, riches, and want of common decency. His patience and assumed meekness under insults, served to increase his popularity, and to attract the more general notice of the people. He found himself surrounded in a short time by many

followers; some of his own class being excited to unite themselves to him, as the means of more easily acquiring the public esteem, and to satisfy their darling passion of being thought saints; whilst others, with more pure and disinterested motives, and firmly believing in the reality of his affected sanctity, took him as their guide, and hoped, through his intercession and prayers, to obtain favour with God. O, human blindness! And was there no one to preach the blessed and life-giving doctrine of justification, through the vicarious atonement of a Saviour, to these souls panting after immortality? Was there no one to point out to them the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world? Their error was more of the judgment than of the heart, and had Francis and his co-impostors been as desirous of exalting the kingdom of Christ, as they were of exalting themselves, to these souls asking the “way to be saved,” his answer would not be—“believe in *me*, unite yourselves to me, and under my protecting wings, ye may be sure of salvation:” but it would be—“believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved.” But this answer would debase himself, and make him lose the fruits of his imposture—the acquiring a name for himself, and the honour of being founder of a monastic order.

Francis, soon after he had acquired a sufficient number of followers, and had excited in the minds of the people an extravagant notion of his superior holiness, retired into the mountains of his native town, Assisi, perhaps really fleeing from his father, who had sense enough to wish that his son might distinguish himself in some other way; or perhaps, to give the appearance of reality to the story he had already fabricated about his rule; which has been already related. It is said by his monkish biographers, that his father had him forcibly brought back

to his house at Assisi, and confined him for a considerable time to one of the rooms, secured with a lock and key, in order to turn him away from his intention of becoming a saint; but finding this and many other like attempts on his virtue (as they call his obstinacy,) of no avail, he, at last, stripped him naked and turned him into the streets. Be that as it may, it is certain that he obtained the confirmation of his rule from Pope Honorius soon after the invention of the story about the crucifix, and in less than two years after its confirmation, he saw himself arrived at the goal of his wishes, in being the founder and head of a flourishing order. In some of his pictures, which may be frequently seen in the Franciscan churches, he is represented in a state of nudity, running away from his father, and fleeing for protection under the folds of the pope's garments, with the inscription, "Pater me abjecit, Deus autem me accepit." (My father has cast me off, but God has taken me in.) This probably alludes to the circumstance related by his biographers, of his father's having turned him away as incorrigible, and disobedient. A breach of the third commandment is thus held up as worthy of imitation, and made one of the virtues of a canonized saint! Popery, popery, when wilt thou learn to blush?



## CHAPTER VII.

Novitiate—Education of Novices—Master-novice—His Qualifications—Popish prayers—Canonization and Beatification—Canonical hours.

THE first year of a monkish life is called the year of novitiate. During this year, the novices, or embryo-monks, live apart from those, who are already professed. Their rooms are situated in the most retired part of the convent, nor are they allowed to have intercourse with any one, or even to speak to each other without leave from the master-novice. He is always at their side, and they must be governed entirely by his directions, which are always given in a tone of command. He is for the most part a learned man, though it not unfrequently happens, that he is chosen to that office more on account of his cunning than his learning: indeed, the chief qualifications looked for in a master novice are, a *calm, even temper; a knowledge of the human heart; an utter devotion to the good and aggrandizement of the order; and a power of deep dissimulation*. The two latter qualifications are considered as most essential; the first, in order to be able to impress on the minds of the novices the same love and devotion for the good of the order, which stimulate himself: the last, in order to closely observe, and at the same time, appear as if not observing, the actions and even the thoughts of those committed to his guidance. His first care is to dive into the novice's natural disposition, by leaving him to himself, and almost master of his own actions for the first two or three months. Having found out

his failings, which perhaps, in the opinion of a more upright judge, would be considered as leaning to virtue's side, he then prepares for the remedy.

Nothing is so much dwelt upon in the education of novices, as the article of prompt and passive obedience. This is held up to their view as the greatest of all possible virtues, and the one, upon which all other virtues are founded. To accustom the mind to be guided in every thing by the command of the superior, the master-novice is sure to command things, which, from his own observation, he thinks might be in direct variance with the natural or acquired disposition of the novice. If he observe one of his pupils passionately fond of reading, and study, he will command him to abstain from such indulgence for a certain time, and then reads him a lecture on the vanity of all human acquirements. Should he observe another rather tired of the stories contained in the "*annals* of the order,"\* it is his duty to command him to read so many pages of these annals every day, and render an account of what he had read, with his reflections thereon, at some stated time, to himself. By degrees, the mind of the novice, trained up in this way, accustoms itself to depend entirely upon the will of others, and almost forgets, that it has in itself an innate power of volition. When arrived at this point, the master's work is more than half done. He then, by slight insinuations at first, and afterwards more openly, establishes the monstrous doctrine "that the good of the order ought to be consulted in every thing."

\* The book, or rather books, for there are 7 huge folio volumes of it, used for instructing the novices in monkery, called "*gli annali del serafico ordine*"—the annals of the seraphic order.—These annals rival the breviary itself in lying, and seem to have been written by the inspiration of the father of lies himself.

He proves by arguments the most convincing to those minds already prepared for them, that a "thing essentially bad in itself becomes good, when it is performed for the advancement of the order, or by the command, of the superior, who ought to be the best judge of what is lawful, and what unlawful to be done by the subject." He then sums up, and concludes his anti-Christian theories with one short rule, "that by obeying his superior in every thing, a monk may be sure of everlasting life, and can never commit a sin, even whilst in the performance of the basest action, if he performs it by command of his superior."

It is also the duty of the master-novice to teach the novices the ceremonies and prayers of the church, and the manner of reciting the divine office in choir. The ceremonies consist in the different genuflections to be made at the time of mass; the number of times the ground ought to be kissed; and the posture of body to be observed on different occasions. In the presence of strangers, they are taught to put on a holy mortified countenance, to keep their eyes fixed on the ground, and their arms crossed on their breast. They are taught to answer modestly and in a few words to any question that might be put to them, and to evade all questions relative to the internal policy of the order. Thus should an acquaintance ask a monk, "whether it be likely that Padre N—will be made provincial at the ensuing chapter," the monk is sure not to understand the question at first, and to endeavour to evade it. When pressed, however for a direct answer, he either pleads ignorance on the subject, or simply says "that the election of superiors rests in the hands of God, and that for his part, he is willing to obey whomsoever it may please the Divine Will to place

over him." By this show of humility, he leaves the inquirer as wise as before, and in admiration of his deep resignation to the will of God. The novices are early exercised in this manner of answering. Their master will, for instance, ask one of them, "If it be raining, or fine weather." The simple, direct answer would be "Yes; or no;" but the novice is taught to answer "It seems to me," or "If I be not mistaken; it is fine weather, or it is raining."

The prayers, which they are taught, chiefly consist in repeating the rosary of the Virgin Mary; or in getting by heart some hymn, composed in honour of some other Saint or Saintess, and accustomed to be sung before his or her image, in order to implore its intercession. The rosary is a species of superstitious worship—for prayer it can scarcely be called—in which one "pater noster" is offered to God for every ten "Ave Marias" offered to the Virgin Mary. It is made up of ten parts, in each of which the *Lord's prayer* is repeated once, and the *Hail Mary* ten times, so that *one hundred prayers* are repeated in honour of the Virgin, and *ten only*, in honour of God. It concludes with the following blasphemous address to the Virgin; which I here subjoin for the satisfaction of those, who are not acquainted with the extent of popish irreligion, and who perhaps will think it impossible, that any church calling itself Christian, could sanction by its authority so barefaced an insult to the great Mediator between God and man. It may tend also to make those who are favoured with the blessings of Gospel liberty, to duly appreciate that inestimable treasure, and exert themselves in behalf of their less fortunate fellow-creatures, who live under the yoke of a wily priesthood, and who are kept from depending upon the all-sufficient atonement of Jesus by having their



minds turned away from Him, the Lord, and Giver of life, to the worship, and adoration of his creatures.

Salve, Regina, *mater misericordiæ, vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra*, Salve. *Ad te* clamamus, exules filii Hevæ, *ad te* suspiramus, gementes & flentes in hac lachrymarum valle, Eja, ergo, *advocata nostra*, illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte, et Jesum benedictum fructum ventris tui, nobis post hoc exilium *ostende*, O clemens, O pia, O dulcis virgo Maria.\* (Hail *holy Queen*, mother of mercy, *our life, our sweetness, and our hope*: to thee do we cry, poor banished sons of Eve, to *thee* do we *send up our sighs*, whilst mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, O most gracious advocate, thy eyes of mercy towards us, and show us, after this our banishment, Jesus, the blessed fruit of thy womb, *O clement, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary*.)

There is also another Latin prayer in verse, and in the form of a hymn, which is frequently sung in honour of the popish Goddess, and which it may not be thought needless to mention here, as it forms one of the parrot-prayers, which the young monk is obliged to commit to memory. It begins with an invocation to the Virgin, which would be very appropriate, if addressed to Venus, whom the poets feign to have been born of the foam of the sea; but when applied to the meek and chaste Mary, it is

\* The translation is added for the benefit of such as do not understand Latin, and who are not, like the greater part of Romanists, loud in praising or condemning what they do not understand. Indeed, the above prayer is daily repeated by millions of devotees before the image of the Virgin, who do not understand a syllable of the meaning of it. If they could understand it, it may be charitably hoped, that they would repeat it less frequently.

certainly very much out of place. The following is a part of it:

Ave maris stella,  
Dei mater alma,  
Atque semper virgo,  
Felix cœli porta.  
Monstra te esse matrem  
Sumens per te preces,  
Qui pro nobis natus  
Tulit esse tuus.  
Virgo Singularis  
Inter omnes mitis;  
Nos culpis solutos  
Mites fac, et castos.

The Virgin Mary is here called the "*Star of the sea, and the mother of God;*" and her intercession is humbly implored, that, making *use of the authority* of a mother, she may *compel* her son to receive the prayers of the petitioners. It seems strange, how they can call her *the Star of the sea*, who, as far as we know, at least, never went to sea in her life. This epithet was given to Venus by some of the ancient Pagans; and who knows, that it was not in imitation of them, that the same is given by papists to the Virgin? As if mistress of every favor, she is also entreated to *make them chaste and mild*, like herself, *after having first freed them from their sins*.

The prayers to the other Saints, in which the novices are instructed, are of the same stamp with the foregoing—all derogating from the honour due to God alone, and bestowing it upon his creatures; some of which, though honoured as saints in this world, are now perhaps howling in the regions of the damned. The novices are directed to have particular devotion for the saints of their own order,

especially for St. Francis, the founder of it; St. Anthony of Padua, St. Crispin of Viterbo, and others of this class, whose merits raised them to the honour of *beatification, or canonization*.\* The pictures of them are hung up in the dormitories and corridors of the convent; and each monk, whether professed or not, is expected, whilst passing before them, to bow down and kiss their frames or canvass.

The novices are also taught by their master, the manner of reciting the divine office. *Officium divinum*, or the canonical hours, is a certain portion of the psalms of David; some hymns in honor of the saints, the lives of the saints themselves, and some detached portions of the Old, and New Testaments, commanded to be recited, under pain of mortal sin, at certain stated hours of the day, by every Romish ecclesiastic, whether secular or regular, and by every professed monk. These hours are contained, arranged according to the day of the month (a saint's name being affixed to every day) and fitted up for the use of the whole year, in the book called "*Brevarium*,"† or the *breviary*. They are seven in

\* There is a wide difference between the meaning of these words; "*beatification* and *canonization*:" the former simply means, that the deceased has been declared "happy," by the mouth of infallibility, the pope; the latter refers to the ceremony of his making his public entry into paradise. He is then able to assist, in an efficacious way, those, who implore his intercession and protection. Whilst simply beatified, his power was not so great. Canonization generally takes place fifty years after beatification; fifty years being the time allowed the beatified man or woman to become acquainted with Heaven, and to make friends there, by whose favour and interest he or she may be able to befriend their worshippers. It probably takes its rise from the *apotheosis*, or deification of the ancient Romans, and does not yield a whit to it in absurdity.

† *Brevarium* is a Latin word, seldom used by classical writers. It

number, having obtained that division on account of the ancient custom of reciting them at seven distinct hours of the day; though now-a-days, they are generally got over at one sitting by secular priests, and at two or three at farthest by regulars, who recite them together in choir. If recited at once, and without interruption, they would take up about one hour every day, though many mumble them over in less than that time, especially those who consider them a burdensome duty, the sooner got rid of, the better. Very many recite them through habit, without reflecting upon, or even understanding the meaning of the words; and not few priests may be found, who never go to the trouble of reciting them at all, although, according to moralists, they commit a mortal sin for every time they neglect them.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Breviary—Its unwilling agency in leading many Priests to the Truth—Story of a Tyrolese monk—His Conversion—The cause of it—Remarks upon it by a Professor of Theology—How a Popish Priest may commit seven mortal sins per diem.

THE ridiculous stories to be found in the breviary are evident proofs of the falling off of that church, which ordains it to be used as a prayer-book by her clergy, from the purity and simplicity of primitive

means a summary. The priests' prayer-book is called by this name, either because it is a summary of all Christian duties, God help us! or because it has been established by the decrees of popes; *breve*, meaning in monkish Latin, a decree in favor, or against a certain individual, or individuals, wherein it differs from "*bulle*," which is an edict directed to the whole Christian world.



Christianity. The metamorphoses of Ovid, or the tales of the fairies are not half so marvellous as some actions and miracles of saints related in it. My wonder is, that the church of Rome, so political and cunning in her general conduct, should show so great a want of common prudence, by commanding her ministers to give credence to the monstrous absurdities which the breviary contains. Were it designed for the laity, there would be little cause for wonder, as it would be only in accordance with the other doctrines, fabricated at the expense of truth and genuine Christianity, which are daily held up to their belief; but that the agents, makers themselves of a corrupt system, should be required to believe in what they know to be completely false, is pushing their obedience a little too far. The breviary, however, strange as it may appear, has been the unwilling means of drawing many souls to the life-giving truth, as it is in Jesus. Many priests who are ordained, firmly believing in the truth of the Romish church, soon become disgusted with the fables contained in this, the priest's prayer-book; and having found comfort in the detached and mutilated scraps of Scripture, scattered here and there through it, they are excited to examine the whole Bible more diligently, whence they are sure to derive a consolation which the breviary never can bestow. A striking instance of this fell under my own observation a few years before, through God's mercy, I shook off the yoke of popish bondage. As it seems connected with my present subject, it will not be amiss to relate it.

A young Tyrolese studied at the same convent with me at Rome. He was distinguished for talents superior to those of many of his fellow-students, and was very early marked out by the superiors of the order, as one likely to be of use in founding con-

vents, and propagating the Romish tenets in his own country. A close friendship existed between him and me; and, having opportunities of observing him, which he was cautious in affording to any one else, on going into his room, I often found him comparing Deodati's Italian translation of the scriptures with the Latin vulgate. How he came by the former, I do not now recollect, or perhaps he never told me. He knew very well, that Deodati's bible was prohibited, and therefore he kept it under a tile, which he could raise up and lay down in the pavement of his room.\* He had no fear, that I would betray him, for he well knew, that I was at that time a Christian only in outward appearance, and a secret scoffer at Christianity in general, and at monkish Christianity in particular. I made no secret of my opinions to him, believing him to be of the same mind. I observed, however, that he was growing every day more serious, and less inclined to join me in my remarks on the Christian religion, though he had the same indifference as formerly for the rites and ceremonies, in which his station obliged him to join. The cause of this change, I could not then guess, but it afterwards became manifest, when, after being ordained priest, he was sent by the Propaganda Fide† a missionary to Rhezia. He had not

\* Those who have been in either France or Italy, can easily conceive how a tile could be raised up from the pavement of a room; but for the information of such as have not, it may be necessary to add, that rooms are very seldom boarded in these countries, bricks, and tiles being used for flooring instead, even in the highest stories of houses.

\* A college at Rome, expressly designed for the education of missionaries. There are in it students from almost every part of the known world, prepared, *vi et armis*, if preaching will not do, to disseminate the soul-destroying doctrines of popery through whatever part

been absent more than four months, when he wrote to the general of the Capuchins, requesting, that he should consider him no longer as one of his subjects, and acquainting him with his having embraced, through conviction the reformed religion in one of the Protestant cantons of Switzerland. He said, that the stories of the breviary first led him to doubt of the truth of popery, and by degrees precipitated him into infidelity; that he found comfort in reading some portions of the Scriptures, scattered through it; and that from reading a part, he was induced to read the whole, which ended in his again embracing Christianity under a purer form than that of the church of Rome. His change and the reasons for it, I learned from the professor of theology, to whom it was communicated by the general, that he might warn his other students to beware of the fatal effects of doubting of the truth of the infallible church of Rome. The professor in endeavouring to show the futility of the reasons, which induced him to embrace the reformed church, was obliged to declare first, what these reasons were; and after a long comment upon them, he wound up his arguments by attributing the change to the temptation of the d—l, who will certainly possess him hereafter, added he charitably enough, if he continue a heretic.

It is not to be supposed, that all priests, who are of the world they may be sent to. So devoted are they to the pope, that they are called through contempt, by the other ecclesiastics “*guastatori dell’armata del Papa*” (the pioneers of the pope’s army.) A high dignitary of the Romish church in this city (Philadelphia) is a sapling reared in this fruitful hot bed of false religion. I wish Protestants would imitate Rome in establishing such another institution, to counteract the evil effects naturally to be expected from having popery instead of Christianity preached to souls panting after the waters of life.

led into infidelity by the fables of the breviary, are so fortunate as to search the scriptures for light, like my Tyrolese friend. The greater part of them, after having discovered the fallibility and monstrous absurdities of the church, which claims for herself *alone* the title of "*infallible*," judge of all other churches by the same standard, and imagine, that all and every doctrine of Christianity are so many cunningly devised fables invented by a certain class of men to answer their own private ends. They do not, however, on this account, cease from teaching and preaching the popish doctrines to all those, over whom they have acquired influence; but on the contrary they seem, judging from outward appearance, to be most firm believers in them, and become their most zealous defenders accordingly. Having embraced the priesthood as a profession, they are determined to get a subsistence by it, and being well aware, that the greater the darkness and ignorance of the people, the greater will be the respect attached to their own persons, and consequently the greater also their emoluments: they therefore zealously propagate the Romish tenets, and conform themselves outwardly to the practice of them. Their chief care is to increase the reign of ignorance and superstition by a few well-told tales taken from the breviary, or from some other Saint-book; exciting thereby the devotion of the people and creating a most furious belief in the most absurd doctrines. By this manner of acting, they find themselves the gainers, and in process of time, the long habit of deceiving others, ends at last in deceiving themselves, and though scarcely believing in the first principles of Christianity, they flatter themselves into a belief of being very good Christians. Such is human delusion, and such are the evil effects necessarily flowing from popish doctrines!



It may be thought by many, that I am inventing stories for the purpose of heaping odium on the church of Rome, whilst relating some of the ridiculous tales extracted from the breviary; but as the book is still extant, and to be found in the hands, or at least on the book-shelf \* of every popish priest in this country; those who doubt the authenticity of my extracts, are invited to examine for themselves. Indeed the doubt of their authenticity is perfectly reasonable, for the judicious mind can hardly conceive it possible, that such a farrago of absurdities could be offered to the belief of any one possessed of the powers of reason. But as the actual existence of those absurdities includes also their possibility, I have nothing more to do than give them as they are.

## CHAPTER IX.

Design of the Breviary—Pius V's bull—Extract from it—Marcellus—Life of Gregory the Great—His works—Life of Leo. I.—His great exploits—Remarks thereon—Nunneries of Tuscany.

THE first and leading feature of the breviary is its tendency to extol and confirm the usurped au-

\* Very many priests keep it only to save appearances, as a book which they are supposed to be never without, though they never open it unless in the presence of others; thereby, according to some of their own moralists, committing *one* mortal sin for every day they neglect to recite the canonical hours from it, and according to others, committing a mortal sin for every one of the hours not recited, which, the canonical hours being seven, make *seven* mortal sins per diem—a good round number in a year! How many then in a long life?

thority of the Bishop of Rome. It begins with the bull of a pope confirming its contents and anathematizing any one—(God help me and all protestants, if the pope's *anathema* be any injury!) who would have the boldness to call in question any thing contained in it, or who would dare substitute any other book in its place. Thus the breviary published immediately after the council of Trent by command of Pius V., is fortified with a bull from that pope, beginning with the words "Quod a nobis,"\* in which complaint is made, that the former breviaries had been corrupted in several places, and that the clergy were accustomed to shorten, by their own authority, the offices of the saints, in order to spend less time in reciting them. It then goes on to command, that from and after the publication of this bull, the breviary, of which it is a confirmation, should be used throughout the whole Christian world, and that all other breviaries published anterior to it, should be considered as abolished and prohibited. It also ordains, that the breviary in question should not be printed in any other part of the world than Rome,† without express leave from the pope himself. All the foregoing articles are ordered to be observed strictly, under pain of excommunication—the usual threat for enforcing the Pope's commands. The original words are: "Sed ut breviarium ipsum

\* The bulls of popes are generally called from the words they begin with: thus the bull by which Clement XI. condemned the Jansenists, is called the bull "Unigenitus" from its beginning with the words "Unigenitus Dei filius."

† This clause is manifestly intended for the purpose of drawing money into the Pope's treasury; as it may be supposed, that leave to print the breviary in Paris, and in other Roman Catholic countries, would not be granted unless well paid for. There is in the Philadelphia library an edition of Pius V's. breviary printed at Paris.

ubique inviolatum et incorruptum habeatur, prohibemus, ne alibi usquam (præter Romæ, scil.) in toto orbe sine nostra . . . . . expressa licentiâ imprimatur vel recipiatur. Quoscunque, qui illud secus impresserint, vel receperint, excommunicationis sententiâ eo ipso innodamus.” The concluding words of this bull are so remarkable, that, although they do not strictly belong to the present subject, I cannot refrain from copying them, especially as the same, with very little alteration, are the concluding words of all bulls promulgated by the authority of the purple tyrant. They fully show forth the arrogant pretensions and overbearing policy of that church, which claims for itself alone an unlimited power over the souls and bodies of God’s people, and which power it does not actually exercise to the destruction and downfall of pure Christianity, and of every principle that ennobles man’s nature, *only* through inability to enforce it. The words are the following: “Nulli ergo omnino hominum liceat hanc paginam nostræ ablationis, et abolitionis, permissionis, revocationis, præcepti, mandati, decreti, prohibitionis, cohortationis, voluntatis infringere, vel ei ausu temerario contraire. Si quis autem attentare præsumserit, indignationem omnipotentis Dei, ac beatorum Petri & Pauli, Apostolorum ejus se noverit incursum. Dat. Romæ apud Sanctum Petrum, anno incarnationis Dominicæ MDLXVIII. Sep. Idus Iul. Pontificatus nostri, anno tertio.” (*Let not any one therefore break through, or go against this our page of abolition, ablation, (of the former breviaries) revocation, precept, command, decree, prohibition, exhortation, and will; or dare act, contrary to it. But if any one dare attempt to do so, he may be sure of incurring the indignation of Almighty God, and of his blessed apostles, Peter and Paul.*

Dated at Rome from St. Peter's in the year of the Lord's incarnation 1568, on the seventh of the Ides of July, and in the third year of our pontificate.")

The life of every pope from the first to the beginning of the fifth century is fraught with fables of their sanctity and supremacy; and of the many miracles performed by them in defending and upholding the religion of Christ among the Pagans of the day. Their supremacy especially and the acknowledgment of it by the laity and clergy of the primitive church, are things more particularly dwelt upon. Out of a great many stories of this kind, I will select a few, which, to avoid all suspicion of fiction, must be given in the language of the breviary—the Latin. The translation is annexed for the use of those not acquainted with that language.

In the life of Marcellus, pope and martyr, whose festival is celebrated by the church of Rome, on the 15th of January, we are told that he performed the office of high priest, or pope, during the reign of Constantius and Galerius; that, by his advice, two Roman matrons bestowed their riches (a broad hint to modern Roman women) on the church; the one named Priscilla having built a cemetery for the use of the Christians; the other called Lucina having bequeathed all her wealth to the disposal of the church, without specifying any particular object. We are further informed, that the holy pontiff wrote an epistle to the bishop of the province of Antioch, in which he *claims* the *primacy* for *the church at Rome*, and in which he evidently proves to demonstration, that that church should be called *the head of all other churches*. We are told, that in the same epistle there can be found written these words: "*No council can be lawfully assembled nor celebrated without the authority of the supreme pon-*



*tiff.*"\* The original Latin is as follows: Marcellus Romanus a Constantio et Galerio usque ad Maxentium pontificatum gessit; cujus hortatu duæ matronæ Romanæ, Priscilla cœmeterium suis sumptibus . . . . edificandum curavit; Lucina bonorum suorum Dei ecclesiam fecit hæredem . . . . . Scripsit epistolam ad episcopos Antiochenæ provinciæ de primatu Romanæ ecclesiæ, quam caput ecclesiarum appellandam demonstrat. Ubi etiam illud scriptum est, "nullum concilium jure celebrari, nisi ex auctoritate summi pontificis."

The foregoing story is probably intended to show forth the authority of bishops of Rome in the first ages of the church. By Marcellus being represented to have persuaded two Roman matrons to leave their property at the disposal of the church, it is hinted, that those who act so, are doing something meritorious in the sight of God; and that such actions should be more frequently imitated in modern times. His writing an epistle to the Bishop of Antioch and his suffragans, claiming primary for the church at Rome, and endeavouring to prove that this church is the head of all other churches, is nothing else than making him arrogate to himself and his church an authority, which, it may be supposed, he never once thought upon; papal supremacy being evidently the invention of later years.

\*Summus Pontifex, or Pontifex maximus was an officer in pagan Rome, who had the direction of the sacrifices and ceremonies appointed to be performed in honour of the gods. It was his duty also to go through the ceremonies of augury. The modern Christian Romans imitating their pagan ancestors in this as well as many other things, call the bishop of their city "Pontifex maximus," or in Italian "Summo pontefice." It is a remarkable coincidence, that the same name is given by the Tartars to their Grand Lama, who is adored and worshipped by them in the same way as the pope is by Romanists.

The next life we give an extract from, is that of Gregory the First. In him, a pope is held up as an example of humility, charity, and learning. Fearing to be elected to the popedom, he hid himself in a cave; but being discovered by means of a pillar of fire, indicating the place in which he lay hid, much against his will, he is conducted to St. Peter's, and there consecrated. He invited to his table daily a number of pilgrims, and once had the happiness to receive, as his guests, an angel, and the Lord of Angels, disguised as pilgrims. He restored the Catholic faith, which was declining in many places. He repressed the boldness of John, *Patriarch of Constantinople, who arrogated to himself the title of universal bishop*. He turned away from his purpose the Emperor Mauritius, who wished to hinder those that were formerly soldiers from becoming monks. He wrote many books, which, whilst dictating, Peter, the deacon, often saw the Holy Ghost over his head in the form of a dove. Truly admirable were the things which he said, which he did, which he wrote, and which he decreed. Having performed many miracles, he was at length called to heavenly happiness; and the day on which he died is observed as a festival *even by the Greeks*, on account of the eminent sanctity of so great a pontiff. (Gregorius Magnus, . . . . honorem (pontificatus) ne acciperet, quamdiu potuit, recusavit: nam alieno vestitu in spelunca dilituit, ubi deprehensus igneæ columnæ indicio, ad Sanctum Petrum consecratur. Perigrinos quotidie ad mensam adhibuit, in quibus et angelum, et angelorum dominum perigrini facie accepit. Catholicam fidem multis locis labefactatam restituit. Joannis Patriarchæ Constantinopolitanæ ecclesiæ audaciam fregit, qui sibi universalis ecclesiæ episcopi nomen arrogabat. Mauritium imperatorem hos, qui milites fuerunt, mona-

chos fieri prohibentem a sententia deterruit. Multos libros confecit, quos cum dictarat, testatur Petrus Diaconus, se spiritum sanctum columbæ specie in ejus capite sæpe vidisse. Admirabilia sunt, quæ dixit, fecit, scripsit, decrevit. . . . Qui denique, multis editis miraculis, quarto Idus Martii, qui dies festus a Græcis etiam propter insignem hujus pontificis sanctitatem præcipuo honore celebratur, ad cælestem beatitudinem evocatus est.)

The life of Gregory, as it stands in the *breviary*, for there are related various lives of the same pope, differing from one another as much as popery differs from pure Christianity, is intended to set forth to the world an example of a pope, humble, charitable, and learned. His humility in refusing the pope-dome, and his charity in relieving the wants of pilgrims, and in inviting them to his own table, are worthy of admiration, if true, and worthy of imitation by his successors. The fable, of his having entertained at his table an angel, and the Lord of Angels, carries with it its own refutation, as does also the attestation of Peter, the Deacon, who swore that *he often saw* a dove, i. e., the Holy Ghost inspiring him whilst he dictated his works—works, too, which, taking them in general, would do very little honour to a man of sense and talents, relying on his own natural genius. How must they then derogate from the honour of the Deity, when attributed to the Holy Ghost? The papal supremacy is never lost sight of; it is never omitted to be brought before the mind of the reader of the *breviary* whenever an opportunity presents. For the sake of upholding that supremacy, every thing, having the appearance of an argument in its favour is brought forward. Thus, Gregory *breaks the boldness* (such is the literal translation of the Latin word “frangere”) of another, his equal in dignity, who

assumes the title of "universal bishop." From this we are led to infer, that to the Bishop of Rome alone such a title belongs. For the many wonderful things which *he did and said*, I fear the world now-a-days have not that respect which in the opinion of some they deserve. No, thank God and the Bible, the world is growing daily too wise to be duped any longer by lying wonders.

The life of Leo I. is another proof, that the sole desire, indeed the chief end of the breviary, is the exalting of popes above their fellow man. We will relate it as it stands in the breviary.

Leo, the First, by birth a Tuscan, governed the church of God at the time that Attila, King of the Huns, surnamed "the scourge of God," invaded Italy, and, after a siege of three years, plundered, and afterwards set fire to the city of Aquila. He was already preparing to pass the Mincius with his army, in order to attack Rome itself, when Leo went to meet him, and persuaded him, by his divine eloquence, to lay aside his purpose. Attila, being afterwards asked by his followers, "for what reason, contrary to his usual custom, he had so humbly obeyed the commands of the pontiff?" made answer, "that he feared a supernatural being, dressed in the habit of a priest, who threatened him with instant death if he dared resist the commands of Leo." Among others of his holy statutes, there is to be found one by which it is decreed, that no nun in future should receive a blessed covering for her head unless she could prove forty years of virginity. (Leo Primus, Etruscus, eo tempore præfuit ecclesiæ cum rex Hunnorum Attila, cognomento flagellum Dei, in Italiam invadens, Aqueleiam triennii obsidione captam diripuisset, incendit; unde cum Roman ardentis furore raperetur, jamque copias, ubi Mincius in Padum influit, trajicere pararet, occurrit ei Leo,



malorum Italiæ misericordiâ permotus, cujus divinâ eloquentiâ persuasum est Attilæ, ut regrederetur, qui interrogatus a suis, quid esset, quod præter consuetudinem tam humiliter Romani pontificis imperata faceret, respondit, se stantem alium, illo loquente, sacerdotali habitu veritum esse, sibi stricto gladio minitantem mortem, nisi Leoni obtemperaret. . . . . Statuit, (Leo) et sanxit, ne monacha benedictum capitis velum reciperet, nisi quadriginta annorum virginitatem probasset.)

Leo, surnamed the Great, is ushered into our notice, under the usual title of governor of the church, (rexit ecclesiam,) in order to make us believe that on him alone, and, consequently, on his successors in the Roman see, devolves all ecclesiastical government. He is represented as compassionating the forlorn state of Italy, ravaged by the conquering Hunn, and fearlessly going forth to meet him, and exerting his divine eloquence in order to turn him from his design of invading Rome. But why did Attila obey his commands? for what were but entreaties in the beginning, are, under the magical hands of the compilers of the breviary, transformed into commands (*imperata*) in the very next sentence. Because he feared death, which St. Peter, who is intended by the supernatural appearance of the person in the habit of a priest, and with a drawn sword in his hand, threatened him with, unless he obeyed the pontiff. What other good or glorious thing did he perform, in order to justly deserve the surname of *great*? Why, he ordained that nuns should prove forty years' virginity before that the veils, which they wore on their heads, would be sprinkled with holy water! A truly great edict, and well worthy of a pope. This is also an indirect way of holding up to public admiration the detestable system of secluding females in nunneries, and of

extolling virginity as the greatest of all virtues. Human nature, and nuns too, must have been very different in the time of Leo from what they are now—a-days, or few, very few nuns obtained the honour of a blessed veil.\*

## CHAPTER X.

Continuation of extracts from the breviary—Marcellinus—The pope sacrifices to idols—Why he could not be judged by the church—Infallibility, a species of impeccability—John—The testimony of a horse in favor of his claims—Remarks thereon—A Sample of Gregory the Great's works—Review of the Bishop of Rome's claim to Supremacy—Never acknowledged by the Greek church—Uninterrupted succession—Imaginary popes manufactured.

Not to weary the reader too much, I will give in my own words, without adhering, as I have done hitherto, to the letter of the breviary, extracts from the lives of two popes more—saints, to be sure, as popes always are.

\* Scipio Ricci, Bishop of Pistoja, in Tuscany, has had the honesty to give the world a view of the private life of nuns. His description of the vices and immoralities practised in the Dominican nunnery of Sienna, better known by the name of "Santa Catarina," (St. Catharine's,) would not bear recital. The smaller nunneries of his own diocese (Pistoja) were equally sunk in impiety, and unnameable vices. His testimony cannot be suspected; for it was in the exercise of his *visitatorial office*, to which he was appointed by the court of Rome, that he made the discoveries, (which, by the way, were only a confirmation of his former suspicions,) above alluded to. His work "on Nunneries" has been translated into English, and printed in London some few years back. I am not aware that it has been reprinted as yet in America.

Marcellinus, who lived in the reign of Dioclesian having sacrificed to idols, and repenting of his apostasy afterward, presented himself before an assembly of one hundred and eighty bishops, in order to ask pardon of the church for the scandal he had given, and to receive the usual penance.\* The whole assembly unanimously cried out, when made acquainted with the object of its convocation, "that it had no authority to judge him, for the supreme pastor cannot be judged by an earthly tribunal"—"Nam prima sedes a nemine judicatur." Now, the question naturally arises, had Marcellinus the attribute of infallibility attached to his person, or even to his office, when he scandalized the church by sacrificing to idols? The answer is plain, nor is the difficulty easily got over by the advocates of papal infallibility, though they endeavour to shelter themselves under a covering of metaphysical distinctions, such as "*loquens vel agens ex cathedra, aut non ex cathedra.*" (Speaking or acting from his chair of office, or not from his chair.†) In this erring pope,

\* It was customary in the ancient church to make public sinners do public penance in presence of the congregation, on certain days appointed for that purpose. Among the public sinners were classed those, who either through weakness, or fear of torture had sacrificed to idols.

† The pope is said to be infallible, when he establishes any article of faith, necessary to be believed by the whole church, or when he performs any public act, which the faithful cannot sin by imitating. If he should, as many popes have done, fall into error and heresy, the difficulty is got over by distinguishing between his public and private character: *as a man* he can err; *as a pope*, he can never err. In the case of pope Marcellinus, it is to be presumed, that he acted in a public capacity, whilst sacrificing to idols; and thereby established the lawfulness of idol-worship. Where then is that boasted infallibility, or was it even thought upon in the ages of the primitive church? We have on record va-

however, the claim of supremacy is not forgotten, for the synod is represented by the breviary, crying out with one accord, "that it had no power to judge or give the usual penance to the Vicar of Christ." What an unblushing disregard for truth is here apparent in the compilers of the breviary! What an anachronism! The title of "Vicar of Christ" or that of "Supreme Pastor" was never given to the Bishop of Rome, or acknowledged by any portion of the Christian church, till many centuries after; that is, until the Church of Rome obtained temporal dominion, and resolved to use it in forcing her subjects to acknowledge whatever claim her bishop might think proper to assume. This is a fact well-known to every reader of ecclesiastical history.

The following, which shall be the last extract, relating to popes, has in it something so ridiculous, and at the same time sets forth in so strong a light the pitiable contrivances of the defenders of a false religion, and their monstrous deviations from truth, that I cannot refrain from mentioning it, though at the hazard of being thought wearisome. It is taken from the life of John I.

John, by birth a Tuscan, ruled the church in the

rious popes, who erred in articles of faith—essential articles too, and who are excused in the way mentioned above, or by making an appeal to the weakness of human nature. But they are not to be censured so much for their errors, as for claiming to be superior to error, or above it—in fine, for claiming as their due, an attribute belonging to God alone—a species of impeccability. The scandalous lives of some popes are too well known to need any comment. The names of Alexander VI and John XXII will go down to the latest posterity, linked with the names of Nero, Robespierre, and Henry VIII of England, or with some other names rendered immortal by tyranny, cruelty, lust, and debauchery. What worthy representatives of Christ!



reign of Tustin, the Elder. He was obliged to flee from Rome on account of the persecutions of Theodoric, a heretical King, and take refuge in Constantinople at the court of the Emperor. His journey to the latter capital was remarkable for miracles, and for the singular testimony which one of the brute creation bore to his *really* being the Vicar of Christ. The circumstances connected with the brute's testimony are the following: the pope borrowed a horse from a certain nobleman, to carry him a part of the way, which horse, on account of its tameness and gentleness, was set apart for the sole use of the nobleman's wife. On its being returned to the owner, the lady, of course, attempted to use it as formerly, but, *mirabile dictu*, the horse, from being so gentle and tame before, became on a sudden wild and restive, and more especially so, whenever the lady approached for the purpose of getting on its back; *the animal scorning*, (says the breviary) *to carry a woman, since it had been once honored by carrying the Vicar of Christ.* (Quasi indignaretur mulierem recipere, ex quo sedisset in eo Christi Vicarius.) On which account the horse was made a present of to the Supreme Pontiff.\*

What follows, will be thought a still greater miracle. On the pontiff's entering the gates of Constantinople, he was met by an immense concourse of people, which with the Emperor at its head advanced to meet him in order to do him honor.

\* It may be asked, whether the bones of this holy horse are preserved, as they ought to be, in some church for the veneration of the faithful? To this very pertinent question, I can answer, neither negatively nor affirmatively; but thus far I can say, that there are much more ridiculous relics daily held out to be kissed and bowed down to by the devotees of popish Europe.—But of this more in a separate chapter.

There, in presence of the Emperor, and of the assembled multitude, he performed a most stupendous miracle, by giving sight to a blind man. The Emperor and his people, seeing his power and its effects, immediately and with one accord prostrated themselves at his feet, and *adored him!*—Cujus ad pedes prostratus etiam imperator veneratus est. On returning to Italy, he commanded, that all the churches built by the Arians, should be consecrated for Catholic worship; which command so displeased the heretical King, Theodoric, that having got possession of the person of the holy pontiff by stratagem, he cast him into prison, where he soon after died of the privations, which he underwent. Theodoric himself did not long survive him. It is related by St. Gregory, another pope, that a certain pious hermit saw his soul immersed in the liquid flames of Lipari,\* in the presence of Pope John, and of another person, whose death he had also caused.

Here is a pope, whose whole life was taken up in performing the pontifical duties, and in working miracles, to which, mind, a belief equal to that given to any of the miracles of the Gospel, is required to be given. Without inquiring, whether it became him as a shepherd to desert his flock, and leaving it to the rage and fury of a persecuting tyrant, to seek refuge and protection for himself; let us accompany him on his journey to Constantinople. The story about the horse is so shamelessly absurd, that were a horse able to comprehend it, he would probably kick at the narrator for his disregard for truth. But

\* Lipari, an island in the Mediterranean off the coast of Sicily, in which there is a large volcano. It is not far from the celebrated one of Mongibello, or Mount Etna, which can be seen from it. A sweet delicious wine, called Marvasia, is there produced in abundance.

then the horse was given as a present to the pope. Yes, and why not? The pope very probably wanted one, and—if, indeed, there be even the shadow of a foundation for this bare-faced lie—so jockeyed that which was lent to him, that he made the poor beast serve a double purpose; his own profit, by having it bestowed to him; and his character, by being, through its means, confirmed in the assumed title of Vicar of Christ. That title, and the authority attached to it, must certainly have very little foundation in truth, even in the opinion of its supporters, when they grasp at so ridiculous a testimony as a horse's. Were such a story related to the inhabitants of modern Rome, they would reply, with the Italian shrug of the shoulders, that the horse was priest-ridden, (which is literally true,) or had been fascinated by the pope; the power of fascination being attributed to the Holy Father, as well as the power of the keys. It is most probable, however, that the story has no foundation whatever in truth, it being merely an invention of modern popery, fit to be used as an argument, through want of a better, in favour of an assumed authority.

The miracle of giving sight to a blind man, is nothing more than a preliminary to what follows; that is, to the adoration of the pope by the emperor and people. Certainly, the like adoration is practised daily by modern worshippers of the pope, without so good a cause for such impiety as had been given by the forementioned miracle, whether true or fictitious. As to Gregory's fable about the hermit who saw Theodoric's soul plunged into the liquid fire of Lipari, it is too ridiculous for serious comment. It gives, however, a sample of Gregory's works—works, which, as has been before related, are blasphemously attributed to the Holy Spirit that was seen in the form of a dove hovering around the au

thor's head whilst dictating them. The rest of his works, with very few exceptions, are on a par with this story—the ravings of the disordered imagination of a bedlamite.

The foregoing extracts clearly show, that the authority of the pope, and the bringing forward arguments in support of that authority, are things constantly kept in view by the compilers of the breviary whilst relating the lives and exploits of the first bishops of Rome. They seem never to pay any regard to history, or to the authentic records of the ancient church, which are either entirely silent on the subject of supremacy, it being a claim then unknown; or when mention is made of it, it is only to repress the presumption of some bishop daring to claim it for himself. The Greek church, long before its final separation from the Latin, which did not take place till towards the middle of the eleventh century, never acknowledged that the Bishop of Rome had a greater extent of authority in the universal church than any other bishop had in his own particular diocese, and therefore regarded with becoming contempt, and resisted every attempt made by the Roman bishops to bring the eastern churches under their sway. In the famous controversy relating to the procession of the Holy Ghost, Photius, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, having been excommunicated by Pope Nicholas, convened an assembly, and pronounced sentence of excommunication against Nicholas himself in return, which he got subscribed by twenty bishops, and others, amounting in all to one thousand. This occurred in the middle of the ninth century. I mention it here chiefly to show, that supremacy, however it may be laid claim to by the Church of Rome, was never acknowledged by



the whole Christian church. The claims to supremacy being then without foundation, infallibility, of which it is the support, falls of its own accord.

As for the sanctity of life, and performance of miracles attributed to the early bishops of Rome, some better authority than that of the breviary is needed, in order to justly give them any degree of credence. There certainly were, it may be supposed, many pious and holy men overseers of the Christian community in the church at Rome during the ages of pagan idolatry, but the names of the greater number of these are lost, having never reached beyond their own times, by reason of the distracted state of the primitive church. In order, however, to make up an uninterrupted succession from St. Peter down to our own days, many who never existed at all but in the brain of some monkish annalist, are made claimants for infallibility and supremacy. Lives are written for them, and miracles are related, as if performed by them: the imaginary saints are enrolled in the army of martyrs or confessors, as it may best suit the purpose or the fancy of their biographers to make them either the one or the other.\* But so far from the succession

\* Confessor, according to the signification attached to the word by the ancient church, means a Christian, who, *of his own accord*, presented himself before the tribunal of some persecuting judge, and openly avowed his belief in the religion of Jesus Christ. If brought before that tribunal by force, but did not deny the faith, when questioned by the judge, he was called also a confessor though of a class inferior to the former. If punished by death for this open avowal, he is styled a martyr. The Romish Church calls every monk, whom the folly of his order had got canonized or beatified, by the specious name of '*confessor*'; though far from confessing Christ to be God, he never thought about the matter at all, and only confessed the pope to be infallible and supreme pastor of the church. How different from the primitive confessors!

of the bishops of Rome being uninterrupted, it is even doubted by many historians, whether St. Peter was ever at Rome, at all. He certainly was at Antioch, and preached there the glad-tidings of salvation, but his having been at Rome by no means rests on equal certainty. The church of Antioch, therefore, seems to have a better right to the title of the first see, if that title be essentially attached (which it is not) to the person of Peter; or if indeed such a title belongs by right to any church whatever. If then the reality of St. Peter's ever having been at Rome, be in itself a matter of doubt, with how much greater reason may the fabulous lives of many, who are called his successors, be called in question. And even granting for the moment, that those men did exist, does it then follow, they arrogated to themselves the anti-Christian attributes of modern popes? Did they claim supremacy and infallibility, or did they endeavour to exalt themselves and their see at the expense of every Gospel precept? If we believe the breviary, we must say, "they did." But the few extracts I have given from it, showing what stress should be laid on its authority, will, I trust, caution the reader from coming to that conclusion. I leave him, however, to judge for himself, and make use of his own powers of discrimination, whilst I proceed to the examination of another portion of the same book—that containing the memoirs of the saints, or deified men who were not popes.

## CHAPTER XI.

Continuation of extracts from the Breviary—St Vincent Ferreri—Miracle—Suspension of the laws of nature—Remarks—Adoration of Vincent at Valencia—St. Anthony of Padua—Preaches to the Birds—Hymn composed in his honor—His Miracles—Sailing without ship or boat—Removal of Mountains—St. Denis walking with his head in his hand—Shrine of an Italian Saint—Concluding remarks on the Breviary.

No doctrine is so fondly adhered to by the church of Rome as the invocation of saints, nor is there any other supported by so monstrous a mass of absurd fables as the same. The greater part of the breviary is taken up in relating the actions and miracles performed by them, and in giving a history of the many favors and graces obtained through their intercession, by the numerous devotees, who idolatrously bow down to and worship their images and relics. No fable is thought too absurd, no pretended miracle too contradictory, when related, as being performed by some saint. The lives of monks especially—and the greater part of modern saints were either monks or nuns—are dwelt upon with peculiar emphasis. Their poverty, their self-denial, their obedience, are all related in classical Latin. Then comes the history of the miracles performed by them, of how they were canonized, and of the favors obtained at their shrine before and after canonization. I shall make two or three extracts from the many, whose absurdity renders them worthy of remark. I shall give them in my own words, inviting those, who may be inclined to doubt their authenticity, to examine for themselves.

In the life of St. Vincent Ferreri, a Dominican Friar, we are told, that he performed so many miracles, that his superior, fearing lest their frequency would make them be undervalued in the eyes of the people, deemed it prudent to command him to abstain from miracle-working in future without having obtained first express leave from himself. This command, Vincent, like a good monk, submitted to, being always remarkable for his prompt obedience. It happened one day after this prohibition, as he was returning from celebrating mass at the cathedral church of Valencia, that he saw a mason in the act of falling from a scaffold erected on the side of a high building. Not being allowed to assist him by a miracle without express leave from his superior, and being at this time more than a mile from his convent, he cried out to the falling mason, "stop there, suspended between earth and heaven, till I go to my convent, and obtain permission from my superior to assist thee and to miraculously restore thee to life, if, as is most probable, thou shouldst be killed by the fall." So saying, Vincent hurried away as fast as his feet could carry him to his convent in order to obtain the desired permission, and having laid the case before his superior, he happily obtained it. In the mean time, crowds assembled from all parts of the city to see the mason miraculously sitting in the air without any support; and being informed that it was caused by command of the holy Vincent, his fame grew more and more with the people. The story then tells us, that the mason was rescued from his perilous situation by the endeavours of those assembled, and so saved Vincent the trouble of restoring him to life, if he were killed.

This story, ridiculous as it may seem, is nevertheless strongly believed by many devotees of his Dominican saintship. Indeed a belief in it is sanctioned

by the head of the Romish church himself, it having been declared a true miracle by an assembly of cardinals, and bishops, held at Rome previous to the canonization of Vincent, and brought forward as one of his strongest claims for being enrolled among the number of saints. Pictures representing the miracle are every where to be found in the Dominican churches, whilst smaller ones, engraved designedly for the use of the common people, are to be found in their houses and pasted on their walls. There is a Dominican convent at Chieti, a town of the province of the Abruzzi, in the kingdom of Naples, in the church of which, the subject of this miracle is taken for an altar-piece.\* I was once conversing with a Spanish priest, whom I saw at Rome, on the subject of this miracle, and on the extraordinary adoration paid to Vincent by all Spaniards, and more especially by the citizens of Valencia. He assured me, that the doubting of any one thing attributed to St. Vincent, would be thought by the Valentians the greatest of all heresies, and that the unfortunate sceptic would incur the risk of being torn asunder by the enraged rabble. Even in the pulpits, where it might be supposed at least, that nothing but the vital principles of Christianity would be preached, Dominican preachers relate the life and miracles of St. Vincent to an astonished multitude, and he is esteemed the best preacher, who can preach the best panegyric on their favourite saint. His festival is held in Valencia a day of rejoicing; the guns of the garrison

\* An altar-piece means that picture, which is placed over the altar of popish churches. It is generally a representation of the crucifixion, or of the last supper, or of some other remarkable event mentioned in the Gospel. Monks, in place of these scriptural pieces, generally have for altar-pieces the picture of their founder, or of some saint of their order.



are fired, and the soldiers present their arms to his image as it is carried processionally through the streets, dressed up in a Dominican habit, surrounded by the clergy with large wax-torches in their hands, and followed by the multitude, crying out "gracia, Santo Vincentio, gracia, Santo Vincentio." (favor, St. Vincent, favor, St. Vincent.)

One thing is more especially remarkable in the foregoing story. Vincent, though expressly forbidden under pain of disobedience to work any more miracles, yet when he saw the imminent danger of the poor mason, forgot this prohibition altogether. How then did he reconcile this act of disobedience with the vow, by which he promised to obey to the letter every command, which his superior might think fit to lay upon him? It is got over by saying, that his holy simplicity did not allow him to imagine, that causing a suspension of the laws of nature could be thought a transgression against the command of his superior, and he therefore ordered the mason to remain in the air, until he could get his leave.\*

Our next extract from the breviary is taken from the life of Saint Anthony of Padua.

"Anthony was born at Lisbon, the capital of Portugal. From his very birth, he gave evident signs of his future holiness. Whilst yet an infant at his

\* The above was a case of conscience (as like cases are called) actually given by a lecturer on Moral Theology to his students: and which, after having been debated upon for some hours, was, in the end, decided to the satisfaction of all present, by attributing the act of disobedience on the part of Vincent to a holy simplicity. The case was the more difficult, because no one could have the boldness to bring a verdict of sinfulness against the saint, the miracle having had the approval of the pope, and therefore unimpeachable.

mother's breast, he was observed to abstain from her milk every Friday and Fast-day, though on other days he satisfied his hunger, like any other child. He was early distinguished for the love he bore to the friars of the Franciscan order. One day, a Franciscan lay-brother \* came to his father's house begging for something to supply the wants of his convent, but being refused, the child Anthony, then only six months old, broke out into a fit of crying and became so agitated throughout his whole frame, that his mother suspecting the reason, deemed it necessary to call the lay-brother back, and contribute to his wants. The child was then instantly appeased, and showed evidently by his laughing in the face of the lay-brother, and playing with his beard, what was the cause of his crying. At two years old, he was a constant attendant at the holy sacrifice of the mass; and even at that early age, learned without an instructor the manner of answering the priest, whilst celebrating that divine ceremony. At the age of fourteen, he embraced the Franciscan order, and distinguished himself in a short time for his love of fasting and other mortifications. He never eat but one meal a day during lent, and that very sparingly. To mortify every desire of the flesh, he was accustomed to mix ashes with his food, lest he should experience the slightest enjoyment from the sense of taste. Having finished his studies and being ordained priest, he was deemed a fit subject to

\* Lay-brothers are the servants of the monasteries, and generally go about the towns and villages, collecting money for the service of the community. They are, for the most part, very ignorant; few of them having ever learned to read. They are professed, like the other friars, and instead of the office from the breviary, they mumble over so many Pater noster's and Ave Maria's. Many of them become saints. Ignorance is the mother of popish sanctity.

send as missionary to Turkey. But God, who had chosen him from his infancy to be a vessel of election, designed him for another work—the work of converting the city of Padua, at that time sunk deep in the mire of vice and debauchery.”

The ship, in which he left Lisbon, being obliged by unfavourable weather to put into Venice; the saint retired to his convent in the latter city. A preacher being wanted for the neighbouring city of Padua, the man of God was chosen, (God Himself surely directing the choice,) to carry the words of life to that dissolute city. The Paduans at first refused to listen to him, but he attracted their attention by a stupendous miracle. One day, the clamour became louder than usual against hearing the word of God, when the saint, turning away from the stone-hearted people, invited the birds of the air to come and hear the tidings of salvation. In an instant, the church was filled with birds, which, forgetting their natural timidity, perched on every side around the pulpit, and attentively listened to the sermon. The people seeing this, threw themselves at the saint's feet, and humbly entreated his prayers and intercession, to avert the arm of God, which was going to visit them for the neglect of his word, and of his servant. The saint, by preaching that whole lent, converted nearly the entire population; so that there were not priests enough to hear the confessions of the numbers approaching the tribunal of penance. Priests were sent for from the neighbouring cities, and the people became reconciled to God through *their agency*. Nor would they ever allow Anthony to leave them afterwards, but prayed and entreated him to remain among them; which he did to the end of his mortal career. A no less surprising miracle than the one already related is the following: in this his first mission, Anthony was

wholly unacquainted with the Italian language, and therefore preached to the Paduans in Portuguese, his native language, which the latter understood for Italian, and were surprised that a foreigner could have a greater command of it than they had themselves. When, however, Anthony modestly made known, how the affair actually stood; then their respect and esteem for the holy man increased tenfold. He performed other innumerable miracles, curing the sick, giving sight to the blind, *limbs* to the *limbless*; children to the childless, and teeth to the toothless! He at last passed to receive the crown of glory, which *his works* so richly *merited*, full of the odour of sanctity."

Such is the life of Anthony of Padua, the great idol of the Italians, and the fitting instrument to make a superstitious people bear patiently the galling yoke of popish tyranny. Such are the actions, and such the marvellous works attributed to this Christian Juggernaut by popular superstition, excited by priest-craft. As great as the veneration is, in which Vincent Ferreri is held at Valencia, greater by far is that, in which Anthony is held in Padua, and indeed in every town and village of Italy, which is so unfortunate as to be pestered with a convent of Franciscan friars. His name is given by parents to their new-born babes; and that child is superstitiously supposed to be guarded, and protected from all sickness, and other evils attending the infant state, by the saint, whose name it has the honour to bear. It is no uncommon thing to find a whole family, and almost a whole village, with few exceptions, every individual of which is named after this saint. Nor would it be any easy matter to distinguish them one from the other, were it not for the additional name of some minor saint, affixed or prefixed to the fa-

voured one of Antonio. Thus one is called simply Antonio; and for the most part, this is given as if by right, to the eldest child, if a male, and Antonia, if a female. Then comes Antonio Francesco, Francesco Antonio, &c. for the men, and Giovanna Antonia, or Antonia Vincenza for the women. In the city of Padua alone, it has been remarked, that three out of five of the inhabitants are baptized by the name of Antonio alone or by some other name placed before or after it. Many churches are taken up altogether with his images, and those of the Madonna; and for one candle lighted in honour of God, there are thousands constantly kept burning in honour of this idol. His altar is adorned with gold and precious stones, whilst that dedicated to Christ is adorned with *cobwebs*. The following hymn composed in his honour, and sung before his image, will give the reader some idea of the worship and adoration paid to this deified monk.

Si quæris miracula,  
Mors, error, calamitas,  
Demon, lepra fugiunt,  
Ægri surgunt sani  
Cedunt mare, vincula,  
Membra, resque perditas  
Petunt et accipiunt  
Juvenes et cani  
Narrent hi qui testes fuerunt  
Dicant Paduani.

The literal translation of the foregoing would be, "If thou seekest miracles, let those relate, who witnessed them. Let the Paduans relate, how death, errors, and calamities retired before the presence of Anthony; how devils and lepers flee from his power; and how the sick arise from their beds of death, re-



stored to health. Seas and bondage yield to his conquering hand, whilst young and old look for and receive through his intercession their lost limbs."

Innumerable are the miracles and extraordinary exploits attributed by the breviary to every saint in the calendar. The miracles of Christ, and the actions of the Apostles are nothing when compared to them, as if the breviary was expressly designed to take away the adoration due to the Creator, and bestow it upon the creature. One, like St Francis de Paula, is remarkable for passing deep and rapid torrents, and oftentimes the sea itself, without the help of either boat or ship, these being things necessary only for the *profanum vulgus*—the herd of mankind, whilst the sanctified monk can at any time turn his mantle into a ferry-boat, and acting himself as pilot take his companions in his mantle-boat as passengers. Another is famed for removing mountains by a single word; as is related to have been done by Gregory Thaumaturgos, or the miracle-worker, when a huge mountain, impeded the labors of the workmen, employed by him in building a church. The saint seeing, that it would take up too much time and labor to remove the mountain in the ordinary way, ordered it to depart immediately from the place, wherein nature had formed it, which order the mountain, obedient to the command of the holy bishop, immediately obeyed, moving in the sight of the assembled workmen to a distance of two miles from its former site.\* Some other saint is

\* The above miracle will probably recall to the mind of the reader the well-known story of Mahomet and the mountain. There is, however, this difference between the two stories; that Mahomet was obliged to go to his mountain, whereas Gregory's mountain was commanded to retire from him. The Arabian Impostor, cunning as he was, had not half the invention of the Christian bishop, or rather, of his historians, who, when they attempt a miracle, per-

famed for walking two miles with his head under his arm, after it had been severed from his body; which is as probable as the story, believed by some of the Irish peasantry, of St. Patrick's swimming across the Liffey with his head between his teeth!\*

The favors obtained by faithful believers on touching the bodies and relics of the saints, are also recounted by the breviary in classical Latin. Some bodies are stated to have continued in a state of incorruption for centuries; others, to have emitted a sweet odour on being removed from the place they were buried in†. Thus the breviary tells us, that

form it, if words and affirmation can do it. Indeed the Turkish historian deserved the bastinado for being thus outdone in the marvellous by a Christian.

\* In the life of Saint Denis as related by the breviary, we read, that "he was judge of the Areopagus at Athens, and that being converted to the Christian religion, he was made archbishop of Paris, where he suffered martyrdom, and walked two miles with his head in his hands;" thus confounding the persons of Dionysius, the Areopagite, and of Saint Denis évêque de Paris, contrary to the united testimonies of historians, some of whom affirm, that Dionysius was never in France in his life, whilst others go still farther, and say, that he died a pagan, and that the books going under his name, as far as they relate to Christianity, are the invention of more modern times. A young French lady being asked by her confessor, who was a Jesuit, if she believed that Saint Denis had walked two miles after his head was chopped off, she replied with a *naïvété* peculiar to a French woman, "Oui, mon Reverend Pere, si vous êtes certain, qu'il a fait le premier pas, pourquoi il ne conte que cela" (Yes, Reverend Father, if you are certain, that he had taken the first step, for that is the only difficult one.)

† The bodies of saints are generally removed after their canonization from the common cemetery, and deposited under an altar erected and dedicated in honor of them. So also a shrine was dedicated in honor of a pagan idol. The shrine of a modern Italian idol

the tongue of St. Anthony of Padua (whose life has been already taken notice of) remains to this day incorrupt in the church of the Franciscans at Padua, though it had been buried with his body for more than one hundred years; and that favors are granted, and miracles daily performed for the relief of those, who devotedly worship it. Numerous examples are given of diseases cured, of the dead brought back to life, and of limbs restored;—all effects caused by having the afflicted brought in contact with the body or relic of some saint. The doctrine of purgatory is not lost sight of in the mean time. Souls delivered from the fire of purgatory are related to have appeared to some one, and to have declared, that they owed their deliverance to the intercession of some saint, or to the kindness of some friend, who paid for a mass, to be celebrated on their behalf at the altar dedicated to the particular worship of Saint such-a-one, invoking at the same time the mediation, and pleading the merits of—not Christ, but of the deified idol, to whom the altar had been dedicated.

The breviary is in this way made the prompt-book, from which priests are supplied with the arguments adapted to the propagation, of the soul de-

is filled with the votive offerings of those, who imagined that they obtained some relief in their necessities by praying to the god, that inhabits it. If the skill of the surgeon, or chance, should have cured a broken limb, the cure is not attributed to either, but to the saint, whose assistance was invoked. Horace somewhere mentions a custom of the ancient Romans to hang up a "*tabula votiva*" for having obtained some imaginary help from one of their gods. In imitation of this custom, the modern Romans adorn the walls of a saint's shrine with silver and waxen legs, arms, eyes, crutches, chains—the offerings of those, who had been cured or liberated from bondage through the intercession or agency of the saint, to whom it is dedicated. If this be not giving praise, honor and glory to the creature instead of the Creator, I do not know what is ! !

stroying tenets of a religion, which leaves the precepts and doctrines of the divine Founder of Christianity in the back-ground, and supplies their place with the doctrines and inventions of men; doctrines too, which, regarded even in a moral light, are by many degrees inferior to those delivered by pagan philosophers, deprived, as they were, of the light of revelation. Though the greater number of priests do not believe in the one millionth part of the gross absurdities, which they hold out to be believed by their deluded followers, yet all with one accord work together, the love of filthy lucre being the bond of union, for the purpose of establishing as essential doctrines of the Christian religion those very absurdities. In this they are assisted by the breviary, which seems as if expressly framed to be an auxiliary in their works of deception. The extracts taken from it, will, perhaps, be thought by many too numerous; but were they less in number, it might be supposed that a character was given to it, which it does not merit. Many hundreds of such can be found in it, more ridiculous, if possible, than the few just given. Let these however suffice, and I trust, that they will be enough to convince the most incredulous, that the breviary justly deserves the name of "*impious, absurd, and ridiculous,*" and only fit to be laughed at, instead of being seriously commented upon, had it not been tampering with the life-giving truths of the Gospel.

## CHAPTER XII.

Evils attending a monkish life—Novices kept in ignorance of the real state of a Monk—Passions, to which Monks are subject—Hatred and Anger—Ambition—Tragical story of two Tuscan Monks—Method of conveying moral instruction—Narrative of an occurrence said to have taken place in the Capuchin convent of Frascati—Why the Capuchins wear beards—The Wood of the True Cross.

THE year of novitiate is passed in the way I have been just describing. The novices are not, however, let into all the secrets of the order, till they learn them from their own observations, after profession. They are not, as I have already stated, allowed to have intercourse with the professed monks, until they are professed themselves. They therefore can form no judgment of the real feelings, by which those professed are actuated, or of the degree of harmony and friendship existing among them. They cannot even suspect, that those persons, who are so composed in their manners, and so circumspect in their conduct in the presence of strangers, among which the novices are ranked; that those very persons could have minds glowing with the worst passions to which human nature is subject, and which very often get the better of that restraint, under which they are obliged by circumstances and their station in life to keep them. Hatred, envy, anger, ambition, lust, and avarice are the never-failing companions of a monkish life. Hatred and envy especially, are passions, which more generally predominate in the mind of every individual monk. He hates his fellow-monk for enjoying more of the



confidence of the superior than himself, and envies him for being chosen to fill some situation, of which he himself was ambitious. It has been remarked, that these two passions, hatred, and envy, are the cause of very great evils in monk-houses, and when given way to without restraint, are sometimes followed by tragical events; which rarely arrive at publicity, lest the veneration, in which the order is held by the people should be lessened, if they became aware, that those, whom they honour as gods, are obnoxious to the same passions, as agitate themselves. The better informed class of people are, nevertheless, well aware of the existence of those evils in monk-houses, and seldom let an opportunity escape of mentioning them in public, when they think they can do so without danger to themselves. The monks, on the other hand, in order to maintain their influence, cry up all who are thus bold enough to give their opinion on monkery, as enemies of religion, and very charitably endeavour to bring them under the notice of the secular government, by representing them as *Carbonari*;<sup>\*</sup> thus making their

\* *Carbonari*, *Anglicè*, Colliers, is a name given to a society of men in Italy, who compassionating the degraded state of their country, oppressed by priest-craft, monkery, and the bad government of petty princes, formed themselves into a body, and bound themselves by a vow, worthy of ancient Romans, to rescue their country from its miserable condition, at the risk of their own lives and properties. Truth obliges me to add, that many learned monks and secular priests, who esteemed the common good of greater importance than their private interests, were also members of this society. Three young men of noble families and respectable talents were beheaded at Rome under Leo XII, in 1826, on being convicted of *Carbonarism*. This society is not yet extinct, though it is strictly watched. We may hope yet to see Italy, through its exertions, restored to that rank among the nations of Europe, to which it is so justly entitled, and which it has lost only through the slave-

zeal for the Catholic religion a pretext for being revenged on their private enemies, who, it ought to be borne in mind, are their enemies only inasmuch as they themselves are inimical to the general good of society and to the rules of a Christian life.

A proverb frequently used by the Italians would make one suppose, that contentions among monks are better known to the public, than monks themselves are aware of. In order to express a violent deadly hatred, they call it "*odio all fratesca*" (hatred after the manner of monks or friars.) When this detestable, unchristian-like passion gains possession of a monk's mind, he lets slip no opportunity of gratifying it. He endeavours to prejudice the superior, and the other monks against the unfortunate object of it, either by malignant insinuations, cloaked under a zeal for the good of the order, or by calumniating him to others, or by openly accusing him of some crime either real or pretended. The other monk is not in the mean time passive. He, on his part, endeavours to injure his enemy also. He entertains the same degree of hatred, that is entertained against him, and is hindered by no human or divine law to endeavour to be revenged; always taking care that his desire of vengeance should not get the better of his prudence, for he is well aware, that the commission of any thing, which would be thought an offence against the order, would be only placing himself at the mercy of his opponent, and afford him a cause for triumph. On this account, he takes especial care

making tenets of popery. Italy alone should be enough to exemplify the practically evil effects of that religion, considered only in a political light, and setting aside its erroneous doctrines, relating to the service due from the creature to the Creator—a thing surely of far greater importance, as all must confess, who are fully aware of the infinite superiority of things eternal to things temporal.

never to show any anger in the presence of strangers or of those, who do not belong to the order, nor to reveal to any one outside the convent walls, nor even to his nearest relations, any thing connected with the trouble and vexation proceeding from the other's animosity, with which he is harassed. The secrets of the order are to be kept at all hazards; and if a sense of duty be not sufficient to cause them to be kept, punishments are added, for the person that reveals them, loses all hopes of ever arriving at any thing above a common friar; and if he be a priest, he is suspended from celebrating mass, and sent to some desolate convent among the mountains where he is kept for the remainder of his life, persecuted by his brethren, and cursing the day he first became a monk. The superior, seeing the danger, which may be apprehended to accrue to the order from contentions and animosities of this nature, if they should come to the ears of the public, interposes his authority and fearing some fatal result, separates the combatants by sending them to different convents, and thus brings about a cessation of hostilities. It does not always happen, however, that monkish hatred is stifled by separating the parties. The fire may be buried for some time under the ashes, but there always remains sufficient to blaze up when more fuel is added: so contending monks, though separated for some years, never forget their old animosities, which are always sure to break out with renewed vigor, when they again come in contact with each other. An example which I shall take the liberty to lay before the reader in illustration of the truth of this remark, came under my own observation, whilst residing in the Capuchin convent at Florence.

Two friars, one a native of Pisa, the other of Leghorn, were noted for a strong attachment to each

other, which continued without intermission for a number of years. They were fellow-novices, fellow-students, ordained at the same time, and lived the greater part of their life in the same convent. It seemed impossible that any thing could happen, which might be the cause of breaking through, or lessening the affection and love they bore to each other. The event however, proved, how false were such appearances, and how weak is the tie of friendship, when tried by the test of jarring interests. Both had a desire of becoming superiors, and unfortunately both wished to be made superior of the same convent. Ambition is a powerful passion, when it takes root in any mind, every thing being sacrificed for its gratification; but ambition is doubly powerful, when it takes up its abode in the mind of a monk, it being the only one, that can be given way to, without running the risk of being disgraced. Cæsar had never a greater desire to become the first man in Rome, than monks have of becoming guardians or provincials. All the other passions being considered as unlawful to be gratified, this one of ambition which is considered as lawful, acts upon the mind with a force equal to the whole. Our two friends canvassed, and sought to prepossess in their favour those upon whom the election depended, whilst each to make sure of his own election, and forgetful of their ancient friendship, did not scruple to calumniate and speak evil of his rival-candidate. It happened, however, that neither was elected. Then began the recrimination; one accusing the other of a want of affection, and the other in turn accusing him of defamation, till from being intimate friends, they became dire foes, and let no opportunity escape by which they might injure each other. The contention excited at length the attention of the superior, and to prevent evil consequences,

they were separated, by being sent to different convents. Some years passed away after their separation, and it was supposed that time had healed the wound, which ambition had given their mutual friendship, when they met together again in Florence. Their enmity then broke out anew, and in a moment of ungovernable fury, one drew a knife and stabbed the other; and then supposing he had killed him, flew to the cloister, where there was a deep well, or reservoir of water, into which he plunged.\* His lifeless body was drawn out a few hours afterwards. He that was stabbed, survived the wound, but died soon after of a broken heart; persecuted by the other friars for having been the cause of the other's destroying himself. It was given out in the convent, that the unfortunate self-murderer was deranged, when he committed the rash deed, and therefore his body was buried with the accustomed honors. Every monk was commanded under pain of disobedience never to speak on the subject, nor even to think upon it, if possible. Thus ended this monkish strife, and so fatally, that under an able hand it would make a good subject for a tragedy.

The novices have no suspicion, that such scenes as these related can possibly find a place among men, who seem exempt, judging from outward appearances, from the ordinary frailties of human nature. They are, nevertheless, admonished not to give way to anger or hatred; and the admonition, in order to make a more lasting impression, is conveyed by

\* In the neighbourhood of Florence, there is a great scarcity of water. Reservoirs are prepared in every palace and convent to save the rain-water, which is done by means of pipes fitted to the eaves of the roofs, which convey the water into the reservoirs. These are made very deep, in order to hold sufficient for summer use.



some example, which having its foundation in truth is wound up by calling in the agency of departed spirits—the usual mode of imparting moral instruction, practised by monks. I recollect one of those examples, and in order to give the reader some idea of monkish instruction, I shall relate it here.

In the convent of the Capuchins at Frascati, there is a large room on the ground-floor, which is now used as a lumber-room for old chairs, tables, images, pictures, angels, and all the other paraphernalia, and apparatus which are used for decorating a popish church on solemn occasions. A stranger upon seeing the confused medley of paste-board saints, half-daubed pictures, and stucco-images, with which this room is thronged, would not immediately be able to decide what use they could possibly be converted to, and would, after some reflection, come to the conclusion that they belonged to the manager of some theatre, or that they are a collection of idols collected by some merchant for the East India market. In the middle of the room, there is a circular mark of about four feet in diameter, which from its being two or three inches below the level of the floor, is easily taken notice of. The tradition connected with this spot forms the example by which novices are admonished to take care, that hatred never become master of their better feelings. This room was the refectory, and continued to be used as such for many years after the building of the convent. The reason why it is no longer used for this purpose is stated to be the following. There lived in the convent, some hundred years ago, two monks who entertained a deadly hatred for each other. This hatred continued without any intermission, until one of them was on the point of being called away from this world. On his death bed, he expressed a desire to be reconciled to his enemy, and begged the superior

to call him to his room for that purpose. The other at first refused to go, but the commands of the superior united to his representations at last prevailed. He approached his dying enemy, and granted him apparently his forgiveness, and was seemingly reconciled to him; but whilst in the act of leaving the room, he whispered to one of the other monks, that "because he was dying now, he sought his pardon, whereas whilst in health, he had let slip no opportunity to do him injury," which words being overheard by the dying man, caused him to go into so great a rage, that he expired whilst endeavouring to utter curses and maledictions against his inveterate enemy. Some days after his death, as the monks were assembled to dinner in the refectory, the conversation turned upon the unhappy death of their defunct brother. One represented to the superior the necessity of having a number of masses celebrated for the repose of his soul, whilst another argued, that there was no use in throwing away masses on one, who, in all probability, was howling in the regions of the damned. The conversation was carried on in this way for some time, when lo! the subject of it himself made his appearance to the astonished and trembling monks, encompassed with flames of fire, and heavily laden with fiery chains. Addressing the superior, he said "that he was confined in the regions of the wicked for all eternity, on account of his dying in anger with his brother." Then turning towards his enemy, who stood pale and trembling in his presence, he roared out with a voice of thunder, mixed with a hellish laugh, "thou wretch! thou, who hast been the cause of my damnation, prepare thyself to accompany me, for that I might bring thee with me, have I obtained permission to leave my place of torment for a few moments. Come, then, and suffer with me, as the

pleasure of seeing thee suffer, is the only one I can have for all eternity." Thus saying, he took hold of him by the beard,\* and dragged him into the middle of the refectory, where the ground opening under them, both disappeared, leaving the other monks almost dead with fear and astonishment, and nearly suffocated from the stench with which the refectory was filled. The opening left after their descent could not be filled up, although many horses were employed for some days in bringing rubbish to throw into it; but in vain, till a part of the true cross, preserved in the cathedral church of Frascati, was brought to the convent, accompanied by the bishop and clergy in procession, and singing the litany of the Blessed Virgin, which being held over the vacuum the earth closed of its own accord with the same celerity it had before opened. A new refectory was then built in another part of the convent, and the old one converted into a lumber room, as has been already related.

The foregoing occurrence, just as I have related it, is registered in the convent books, and deposited in the archives of the order, whence it has been drawn forth to serve as an example to future monks

\* The Capuchins wear beards in imitation of their founder, St. Francis, who is represented with a long caroty beard in pictures of him painted by order of the Capuchins. The Observants, on the contrary, another branch of the Franciscans, wear no beards, and therefore paint the same saint without any. This difference has been the cause of great disturbance, between these two branches of the order. Was it not rather in imitation of the ancient Magi, that the Capuchins determined upon wearing their beards? Very probably it was; for we see from the history of all ages, that impostors are fond of having some distinctive mark, either in dress or in the habit of the body, by which they may attract the notice of the dupes upon whom they design to practice their impositions.

of the evil consequences attending anger and hatred. The reader may make his own reflections upon it, and believe it, or not, as he may feel inclined. The fundamental parts are probably true, whilst the marvellous had been added to attract greater devotion towards the *wood of the true cross*, and to prove by an alleged miracle the great respect and adoration, which should be paid to that so called *holy relic*—But of this more will be said under the head of “*relics*.”

### CHAPTER XIII.

Termination of Novitiate—Votes of the other monks required before the Novice can be admitted to Profession—Cérémonies used at the Profession of a Monk—The monastic Vows—Good and bad monks—Story of a bad monk—Monkish Persecutions—The bad monk's flight from Turin—How treated by the General at Rome—His Secularization—Expenses incurred before he could obtain it—The bad monk turned into a zealous preacher of the Gospel—Classification of Monks.

THE year of novitiate being expired, the novice is asked by the superior, if he be desirous of profession, that is, if he wish to take the solemn vows of the order. The votes of the other friars are taken in the mean time, in private, and if the novice have a majority of them in his favor, it is optional with him to profess or not. If, on the other hand, he have not the majority of votes, he is dismissed without profession. This may also be the reason, that novices are kept separate from the other monks, during the year of novitiate, because it is feared, that upon leaving the order, either at their own desire,

because unwilling to make their profession; or being expelled, and therefore not allowed to make it; they might be induced if they had it in their power, to make known to the world the lives, and practices of monks, as they really are—not as they are represented; and thereby injure the order and lessen it in the opinion of the public. They are, therefore, strictly confined to their own separate part of the convent, till after their profession, because, then, and not before, the order has power over them, and can punish them, and take measures to prevent their tattling the secrets of the order, if so they should be inclined. Profession delivers the monk in every Roman Catholic country to the entire management of his Superior. There is no other tribunal to appeal to, if he be oppressed: the superior can imprison, and do what he pleases with him for the remainder of his life.

Very few voluntarily refuse profession, even though they might not like the life of a monk; being afraid of incurring the indignation of their families, or of being ridiculed by their acquaintances. Some without a grain of vocation are most desirous of it, because they well know, that they shall enjoy more liberty then, than when they were simple novices. Many are obliged to return to their secular pursuits, not having had—fortunately enough for themselves—the majority of the votes in their favor. If, however, they should wish to remain for another year, in the capacity of simple novices, they are sometimes allowed to do so; and at the expiration of that time, they are solemnly professed, if they have the majority of votes. Cases of this kind, however, seldom occur. As for myself, I was so unfortunate, (for misfortune it certainly was, though I did not think so, at the time,) as to have the votes of nearly the whole community in my favour, and therefore



on answering in the *affirmative* to the Superior's question of "whether I was desirous of making a solemn profession?" there was nothing to prevent me from binding myself for ever to a state of life and to the practice of a religion, which on closer and fuller examination I was led to consider as sinful and erroneous. I had not, when I gave my assent to be professed, any cause to dislike the kind of life I had embraced, nor the religion I was on the point of becoming so closely connected with. My idea of a monkish life was formed from what I had seen during the time I had remained a novice, and being by nature of a retired disposition, such a manner of life was pleasing to me. I little suspected at that time, that I had more to learn than I was aware of, in order to become a good monk; that is—a something between a Christian and an idolater, as shall be fully proved in another place.

As for the Roman Catholic religion in itself I could not possibly have any dislike to it at that time, for, first, I did not understand it, and therefore could not judge whether it were true or false; again, it was the religion in which I was educated; and with which were blended my fondest and earliest recollections; and it is well known, that the prejudices of education and of early habits are not worn away in an instant. Besides, I had never, though born in a protestant country, seen Christianity under any other aspect, than as she appears in the church of Rome. I had no friend to direct me to "search the scriptures," for light, or to give me a knowledge of vital godliness. My ideas were popish, my manners were popish, my whole soul and body, in fine, were entirely at the pope's service, nor would I have thought it too much, so great was my zeal for popery at that time, to lay down my life in defence of his authority. So far, therefore, from doubting of

the truth of any of the absurd doctrines of Romanism, I considered all and every one of them, without any farther examination, as the genuine dictates of the Holy Spirit, and would as soon be led into the belief of my own *non-existence*, as to that of the pope's establishing an erroneous doctrine for an article of the Christian faith. During the year of my novitiate, however, I sometimes was tempted to consider the stories of the breviary as rather insulting to human reason, and to think that the marvellous tales, under which my master-novice conveyed his instructions were a little out of the way of common sense; but all such thoughts I resisted as temptations of the devil, and therefore mortal sins, if not fought against. I always, in my private confessions to the superior, accused myself of such doubts as these, and he, to be sure, knew how to work on my mind already weakened by superstition, so as to bring it entirely under his own control; and even to make me wish, that the things proposed to my belief were ten times more incredible, that I might have the more merit in believing them. I was divested altogether of the faculty of judging and thinking for myself, and so passive was the submission I made of myself into the hands of others, that, I verily believe, they might have persuaded me with the same degree of ease, to offer incense at the shrine of an Egyptian crocodile, as to pour forth my *Ave Marias* before the image of a Madonna—as absurd, though not altogether so revolting a way of paying homage to the Supreme Being. It may then be supposed, that I was in no state of mind to withhold my consent from what I was expected to do at the expiration of the year's novitiate; and when asked by the Superior, I was greatly rejoiced, and immediately consented to bind myself by a solemn vow to adhere till death to the profession of a monk.

The ceremonies used at the profession of a novice are nearly similar to those practised at his taking the habit. The Superior, as usual, is the principal actor. He celebrates the mass and gives the communion to the novice before he pronounces his vows. After the mass is finished, he ascends the steps of the altar, where sitting in a chair of state, set apart designedly for ecclesiastical ceremonies, he receives the hands of the novice within his own, whilst the latter in a loud voice pronounces distinctly the following vow: "Io, Fra N——, faccio voto e prometto al Dio Onnipotente, alla Beata Maria sempre Vergine, ai Beati Apostoli Pietro e Paulo, al nostro Beato Padre Francesco, a tutti li santi del cielo ed a te, Padre, tutto il tempo della vita mia osservare la regola dei Frati Minori, dal Signor Onorio Papa confermata, vivendo in ubbidienza, senza proprio, ed in castità. (I, Brother N——, make a vow, and promise to Almighty God; to the blessed Mary ever Virgin, to the Blessed Apostles Peter, and Paul, to our Blessed Father, Francis; to all the Saints of Heaven, and to thee, O Father, to observe, during my whole life, the rule of the Minor-friars, by our Lord Pope Honorius confirmed; and to live in *obedience*, in *poverty*, and in *chastity*.) The superior then says, still keeping the novice's hands enclosed in his own: 'Ed io, da parte di Dio, se queste cose osserverai, ti prometto la vita eterna.' (And I, on the part of God, promise thee eternal life, if thou wilt keep these promises.) The other monks answer "Amen." The new-professed after this, receives the kiss of peace from his brethren, whilst the choir is chanting the psalm "Ecce quam bonum, et quam jucundum, habitare, fratres, in unum." (How good and pleasant it is, brethren, to live together.) The day of profession, like that of taking the habit, is observed as a festival by the monks; and many friends being

invited to a sumptuous entertainment, it passes over in the same way as the latter, amidst mirth and jollity, their usual method of showing forth gladness on extraordinary occasions; though it may be presumed, that the sight of a good dinner has as much tendency, perhaps more, to excite their mirth, as the addition of a new member to their community.

The day of profession is an era in the life of a monk from which he may date either the happiness or misery of his future life;—understanding for the moment happiness and misery in the sense of those, who place it in the enjoyment or non-enjoyment of the things of this world. If he be a good monk; that is, if he forget all the duties, which he owes to society; if he exert all his powers and talents to promote one great object—the good of the order; if, in order to more speedily arrive at this end, he endeavour, *pro virili*, to brutalize the minds of the people by teaching them the fables and other monstrous absurdities, invented by Rome to maintain her sway over them, if he do all these things, he may be sure of being esteemed a good and faithful monk, and may reasonably expect to lead a happy life, as far as worldly honors and ecclesiastical dignities can make it so. If, on the other hand, he be troubled with a rather delicate conscience; that is, if he dare examine for himself, whether the things he is commanded to do for the good of the order be strictly just; or if, on becoming better acquainted with it, he refuse to exert himself to the utmost for its advantage, if in his sermons he manifest a greater zeal for bringing sinners to repentance, than in making panegyrics on saints; if he preach Christ and Him crucified as the sinner's hope, instead of directing him to the intercession of the Madonna, St. Francis, or of some other saint; if, in fine, he act in this guise, it is more than probable, nay, it is an ab-



solute certainty, that his life will be rendered miserable: he will be treated as a heretic, as one unfaithful to his vows, and as one, who considers the good of the order of no consequence and therefore necessarily a bad monk. He will be persecuted by his fellow monks, his actions and words will be strictly watched, in order to find a pretext for suspending him from his clerical functions: this pretext, because desired, will be soon found, and then he is transported from convent to convent, or exiled to some remote part of the province, where he will be confined to the bounds of the cloister, or, at least, to the garden, detested by all and esteemed by none. His life will thus pass away between vexations and oppressions, and whilst cursing his unfortunate condition, he will date his misery from the day he first forfeited his liberty at the foot of the altar, when making a solemn vow to observe things, which, he is convinced by farther examination, are in themselves sinful, because contrary to the precepts of the Gospel, and at variance with the institutes by which society is kept together.

The foregoing is a true picture drawn from experience, of the life of a good and bad monk. *Heretics*, I fear, will regard the latter—God help their judgment!—as more deserving the epithet of good than the former. *Concedo*, be it granted, but then “good” should not be coupled with the substantive “monk,” for, as metaphysicians say “*omne ens est bonum quoad se;*” (every being is good as to itself.) so also, the latter may be good “*quoad hominem;*” but bad, very bad “*quoad ens;*” that is, as to his profession of a monk. But, metaphysical reasoning apart, it is evident, that a good monk means one of the genus “*homo;*” who is half-Christian and whole-idolater;—(excuse the bull,) who idolizes his order and fixes all his hopes of salvation in the me-



rits to be acquired by benefiting it; who stops at nothing to attain that end; and who, if Christ and his religion should at any time have a place in his thoughts, regards them as things of secondary consideration, and to be placed next in rank, or at farthest on a par with Francis and his rule. \* A bad

\* The above will, perhaps, be considered by many as amplification; thinking it impossible, that any body of men, who go under the name of Christians, could, whatever be the errors of their doctrines, so far forget themselves as to rank Christ and his Gospel with their own inventions. But let those, who argue thus, examine the page of history, where they will find recorded the diabolical, enthusiastic frenzy of the Franciscans of the fourteenth Century, who impiously maintained, that the founder of their order was a *second Christ, in all respects similar to the first*; and that *their institutions and discipline were the true Gospel of Jesus*. History also informs us, that a Franciscan monk of the name of Albizi—a native of Pisa—published a book in 1383,—and with the applause and permission of his order too, remember—whereby he compares saint Francis, that madman and impostor, with Jesus Christ—the Lord and giver of life; and that farrago of absurdities—the rule of St. Francis, with the Christian’s treasure—the Holy Gospels themselves!!—But why should we make so great a wonder of simple theories, when we are so indifferent to the practice of them, placed before our eyes daily? Do we not see Christ and his atonement continually and every hour postponed to human inventions, even in this very country, where the Gospel is said to triumph? To what else do all the anti-scriptural tenets of popery tend, than to draw off the attention of Christians from the all-sufficient atonement of Christ, in order to fix it upon something else—to fix it upon the adoration of the creature, instead of the Creator—by which the inventors of such tenets are benefitted, though at the expense of the souls of those committed to their charge? Yet people, who would be startled at the simple theory, pass over, as trifles, practices, hideous practices of this nature; people pass them over as things too common to be any longer wondered at, or even worthy of remark; and charitably doubt, whether such abuses be not rather the effects of undesigned corruption, than of any fixed

monk, on the other hand—and would to God, there were more of such monks—is he, who not being wholly dead to all sense of religion, wishes to act conscientiously towards God and towards his fellow-men, leaving to others the office of benefitting the order; especially when that cannot be done without trampling under foot the duties he owes to God and to society. He considers his obligations to the latter of far greater moment than those he is under to his order, and therefore endeavours to fulfil them, though at the same time he is injuring the interests of the former; for the particular interest of his order seldom or never can be promoted but at the expense and subversion of society and of religion. Who then would hesitate to choose between serving God, by executing His commands, relative to the duties due to Himself and to His other creatures; and serving Mammon, by providing for the interests of Mammon. This hesitation, however, in choice is made by the good monk; or rather the service of Mammon is chosen without any hesitation, whilst the bad monk chooses the service of his Creator, and therefore is characterized by the other with the epithet of “bad,” and unfaithful to his vows.

The story of a young man, who was for many years the victim of monkish persecutions, and with whom I had a short acquaintance before his escape from the iron grasp of monachism, has in it something so appropriate to the present subject, that I cannot refrain from relating it. He was a native of Chambery, the capital of Savoy. At the age of sixteen, he crossed the Alps and went to Turin, where he embraced the monastic life under the rule of St. Francis. He passed through the year of pro-

theory.—Indeed, it is to be feared, that charity is but too often another name for indifference for the truth, as it is in Jesus.

bation without having had any difficulty thrown in his way, by which he could be deterred from continuing in that state, and at the expiration of the accustomed time, he was solemnly professed. He then began the study of philosophy, and although the course of metaphysics—that part of philosophy, most studied by the monks, because the most incomprehensible—which he was obliged to read, is carefully adapted to substantiate the doctrines of the Romish church; he found, notwithstanding, his belief, not only in that church, but also in Christianity itself, weakened by making use of his reasoning powers. It is true, he knew Christianity only under the corrupt form under which it appears in the church of Rome: he was wholly ignorant of Bible-Christianity, and therefore more worthy of excuse on that account; especially when he had no one to direct him to the fountain of life. The poison of infidelity stole imperceptibly over his mind, and he had scarcely finished his course of philosophy before he found himself a confirmed sceptic. He grew lukewarm in his belief of the ridiculous doctrines of Romanism, and however his station in life obliged him to conceal it, he secretly laughed at the foolish inventions of that church. The study of popish theology—and indeed it deserves the name of popish rather than that of Christian; only directed his unbelief into another channel—for it led him to see, though indistinctly, that there was some foundation for Christianity, but that it was corrupted by those, who had the government of Christ's church in their hands. This he learned, partly from the objections made to the innovations of the church of Rome by Scriptural Christians, and which are set down in the School Theology in order to be answered; and partly from the detached portions of Scripture, which are scattered up and down in the breviary.

He now began to pant after the liberty of worshipping God according to the dictates of his conscience, but alas! he was bound and in the chains of monastic slavery, which were more tolerable to him, whilst he was an infidel, than now, when he saw the truth and could not embrace it. He was ordained in the mean time, and sent to preach some time after, to a town on the Alps, called Susa. Here he endeavoured to preach Christ and Him crucified to the people, instead of enforcing devotion to the Madonna. On being requested by the parish priest to preach a panegyric in honour of the patron saint of the town, he could not refuse; but acquitted himself in so awkward a manner, and in so very few words, changing his discourse to his favourite theme of redemption through Christ, that he incurred the displeasure of the priest, who boldly accused him of heresy. The same priest immediately wrote to his Superior in Turin, requesting, that he might be removed; and giving his reasons for the request. He was accordingly recalled. Upon his arrival at Turin, he was summoned before a chapter of his order, to give an account of his conduct. He endeavoured to exculpate himself as well as he could; simply stating the facts as they were. When asked, why he had not preached the panegyric, as he was requested to do by the parish priest; he replied, that he was unacquainted with the life of the patron-saint, and therefore had no materials wherewith to compose one; and that his conscience would not permit him to draw from his own imagination—the general plan adopted by those, who preach panegyrics on saints. This excuse was deemed insufficient, and he was therefore formally suspended from the office of preaching, as being a person suspected of unsound doctrines.

Now began his life of misery. Every action every



word of his was strictly watched. He was sent from convent to convent, through almost every part of the province and could find no place, wherein he could get a moment's repose from the persecutions of his brethren. He was looked upon by all as one, who was a disgrace to their order, and who was unwilling to labour for its advantages. At length tired out and harassed from such unrelenting persecutions, he determined upon escaping to Rome, in order to lay his case before the General of the order. If he stirred one step without a written leave from his local superior, he would be considered by the rules of the order an apostate; and punished as such accordingly. He, nevertheless, although well aware of the existence of such a law, chose rather to run the risk than be any longer exposed to the unremitting persecution of his adversaries. Upon his arrival at Rome, he was forthwith imprisoned by order of the General; the superior at Turin having written before him for that purpose, stating his suspicions, that he was not a person of sound Roman Catholic doctrines. He was now suspended from celebrating mass, and kept a close prisoner for three months, whilst in the mean time, his family was spending money in petitioning the pope to have his case investigated. When these petitions on the part of his friends came to the knowledge of the General, they only served to increase the rigor, with which the unfortunate young man was treated; for nothing is thought so criminal in a monk as to appeal to another tribunal from that of his own order. Being at last through the interest of a Cardinal, who had a friendship for his family, permitted to plead his own cause; he ably and forcibly exposed to the ecclesiastical court, the wrongs and injuries, which had been done him, and the absolute necessity he was under of leaving Turin, even at the hazard of being thought



an apostate; because he could no longer bear with the unchristian treatment, and violent persecutions, with which he was pursued by his brother-monks. He concluded his address by entreating the court for permission to supplicate the pope for the purpose of obtaining a dispensation from his vows, and and of being permitted to leave the order, altogether; after having obtained letters of secularization\* from his Holiness. His request was granted, though not without experiencing some difficulty, and after his being kept three months longer in prison; (in all six months,) and after his friends had spent more than eight hundred Roman Scudi (about 850 American Dollars) in petitioning the papal court. He retired after his release to his native town of Chamberg, whence, as I afterwards heard, he passed into Switzerland, where he now remains, a minister of the reformed church, and a faithful preacher of the Gospel. The latter part of his story, I have learned sometime since from an Irish gentleman who spent some years in Switzerland, and who was acquainted with him there. He describes him as a zealous and pious Christian, and as one who is a living example of the power of divine grace and of the various means used by God to bring his own to a closer union with Himself.

The foregoing story may give the reader some idea of the hardship and misery, to which a monk

\* *Secularization* means a brief granted by the pope to a monk, whereby he is permitted to leave his order, and live as a secular priest under the obedience of a bishop. This is with great difficulty obtained, and is always attended with great expense; money being necessary to bribe the different officers, who surround the papal throne, and who consider themselves entitled to a share of the plunder with which his holiness fills his coffers. The income derived by the court of Rome from the sale of briefs, bulls, and dispensations is enormous.—But of this, more in another place.

reduces himself who wishes to do his duty to wards God, and towards his fellow-men. If an enlightened mind, assisted by the divine influence, should show him the errors of the religion, of which he is a member, and minister; and if his conscience should afterwards prevent him from being subservient to the propagation of error, he may expect to be treated as rigorously, and suffer the same hardships, as the subject of the foregoing narrative. Should he refuse to fulfil the wishes of the superior, and be backward in working for the good of the order, because he regards the means of benefiting it as injurious to his neighbour, and offensive to God; he is then persecuted, imprisoned and caluminated; he obtains the name of a bad monk, and is set down by his fellow-monks, as one, who had broken his vows, and who dares to set up his own judgment, in opposition to the will of those, to whom he had promised implicit obedience when he made his solemn profession at the foot of the altar. Very few, it must be confessed, are of this description. Some, perhaps, who see the errors in which they live, are careless in correcting them, and do not wish to bring themselves into difficulties. Some there are who see the errors of their ways, also, but are very far from believing in Christianity under any form; they therefore conform themselves outwardly to the state of a monk, and find themselves the gainers by it; for from this class the superiors are chosen. Others again whom we shall distinguish by the name of the *brute creation*, of monkery, can be found, who are too ignorant to discover error, and therefore swallow every doctrine, which is proposed to their belief, with the greatest avidity. These obey their superiors in every thing, and stop at nothing, be it ever so contrary to common honesty; when their commands and the good of the order push

them on. From this class, the saints are manufactured. The fourth class is composed of those, whom we have already distinguished by the name of "*bad monks*" and whose description has been given more fully in the beginning of this chapter. Those who see their errors, but are cold in correcting them, would probably make good Christians in a free country, where they might have the liberty of choosing for themselves; but whilst they live under papal bondage, there is but little hope of their ever emerging from the sink of indifference.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Convents of study.—The Employment, in which those monks who are void of talents are engaged—Monastic studies—Logic—Metaphysics—Its use in supporting Popish doctrines—Dogmatic Theology—Its evil tendency—Mutilation of Scripture—Purgatory—Popish Theologians—Polemical divinity—Character of Popish Polemics—How they excuse themselves—Moral Theology—Auricular confession—Its instrumentality in the support of Priest-craft.

THE young monk is immediately sent away after profession, from the convent, in which he passed his novitiate, or year of probation, and placed in another, which is called a convent of study—in Italian "*convento di studio*." There are in each province\*

\* It should have been before remarked, that, according to monkish Geography a province is that portion of a country, which is under the control, as to monastic affairs, of a certain Superior, called "*Provincial*." Every order has its own provincial, and therefore there are as many provincials as orders in a province. The pope's dominions in Italy comprise four monastic provinces.

many convents of this kind, situated for the most part in fertile, and rich sections of the country. There are also various classes of convents for study. One convent is fitted up for the study of Philosophy; another for that of Dogmatic Theology, another again for the study of Moral Theology. These classes are again subdivided into others: some are set apart for the education of those young monks, who were remarked during the year of probation, to be possessed of talents superior to their fellow-novices; some others are chosen for those, who, though not having very brilliant talents, are, nevertheless, likely to be of advantage to the order, as executioners of the plans laid down by those, who are gifted with superior capacity. There are also other convents, in which the herd of monks; i. e.—those we have distinguished by the appellation of “the brute creation of monkery”—are huddled together. These monks are scarcely above the level of brutes in their intellectual powers, and are chiefly employed—for they are unfit for any thing else—in mumbling over offices, and in repeating Ave Marias before the image of a Madonna. They are, however, whilst young, sent to a separate convent, where they are taught to write their own language grammatically, though but few have talents enough to succeed even in that—and where they are taught to acquire a smattering of Latin, by translating into barbarous Italian the council of Trent, the general school book of this class, because classical Latin is too difficult for them. They are then, after being a little humanised by instruction, scattered through the other convents of the province, in order to serve as a cloak for the conduct of those of their brethren, whose talents and understanding do not allow them to be so *beastly* devout. These are held in great esteem by the common people, for they have always



in readiness some marvellous tale, or some miracle to relate to them, by which they increase their love and respect for the order. After death a great many of them are enrolled in the catalogue of saints—thus verifying the proverb “ignorance is the mother of devotion” by deifying after death men, who, whilst living, were not a hair’s breadth above their fellow-creatures, *the brutes*, in intellectual capacity.

As for myself, I was sent after profession to Rome, and placed under the tuition of a professor, who was esteemed the most learned man of the order, at that time. And here it will not be thought, I hope, foreign to the present subject, if I give a succinct account of monastic studies, and of the manner in which such studies are conducted. I give it the more willingly; because it may be of use to do away with the erroneous notions of some, who are loud in their praises of the great learning and talents, which they imagine—and it is pure imagination—can be found within the walls of a convent. The account is drawn from my own experience, and from observations made during the time I remained in the monastic state.

Logic is the first branch of knowledge to which a monk applies himself, on commencing his preparations for fulfilling the duties which are afterwards to devolve upon him in the course of his clerical career. On this, indeed, his future progress in the other studies chiefly depends, for they are all carried on in the old, scholastic, syllogistical method. He is supposed to have a perfect knowledge of the Latin classics before entering the order, though such a supposition does not always correspond with truth. Many pass through the examination, usually required before being received into the order, more by chance, and the partiality of the examiners, than on account of any perfect knowledge they possess of the things, in which they are examined. Those



however, who are smuggled into the order in this way, usually take their place among the herd I have before described. The treatise on Logic, which is used in monkish schools, is always in Latin. It is generally the composition of some monk, and is delivered in a clear, methodical style, and very easy to be understood—even by men of moderate capacities. The part, which is most dwelt upon, is that, wherein rules are laid down for arguing syllogistically. Indeed the whole treatise is manifestly designed as a key, with which to open the abstruse, and metaphysical reasoning of the School-men, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, Bonaventure, and such like. Besides the simple rules, the students are also taught the best manner of putting them in practice, by holding frequent disputations among themselves; and he is thought the best logician, who can bring his opponent to give assent to a proposition manifestly erroneous, or who can satisfactorily prove that two contradictory propositions can be both true at one and the same time.

After having spent a considerable time and much labor in becoming master of the various kinds of arguments, and in reducing them to practice by continual exercise among themselves; the next thing, to which their attention is directed, is the study of metaphysics. In this also much time is spent, for metaphysics is a species of knowledge held in great repute among monks, and it requires a long time, and great application to get even a partial knowledge of the subtilties, the distinctions, the sub-distinctions, and divisions, which are almost innumerable in this abstruse science, rendered still more abstruse by the obscurity in which it is enveloped by the imaginations—any thing but clear—of those who wrote upon it. Treatises and volumes are written upon things, which, when fully discussed, leave the

reader no *wiser* than before; nor would it be of any importance either to religion or society, whether the same things were ever thought upon, or not, or whether they should be one way rather than in another. Thus, a folio volume, yes, a huge folio! has been written by some idle monk, who had nothing else to do, upon the questions "whether nothing was created?" or "whether God, omnipotent as he is, could, with all his unlimited power create nothing?" Nor ought it to be a subject for wonder, that this science is held in so great estimation by monks, whereas the dogmas, and tenets of their religion especially *those* that have no scriptural arguments in their favor, are in a great measure propped by arguments drawn from it, and rendered thereby as incomprehensible as a fear of detection could desire them. Demonology, or the treatise on *demons* whether good or bad, is designedly fitted up for the purpose of supporting the *modern* doctrine of purgatory—I call it modern, as not being either known or thought upon in the first ages of the church. The different parts, also, into which metaphysics is divided, as *Ontology, Psychology, Demonology*, and the other *ologies*, are the whet-stones, on which their minds are sharpened to defend, and even to invent new doctrines, and dogmas, which are afterwards held up as articles of faith to a benighted people.

The attention bestowed by them upon Physics is very limited, scarcely passing the bare knowledge of the first properties of bodies. Astronomy is studied hardly at all, and the mathematics though studied, are yet passed over in so superficial a manner, that a child at one of the common schools in America, would be able to puzzle many a professor of them whilst endeavouring to demonstrate a proposition of Euclid. The reason why geometry is so little studied probably may be, because they are unwilling

to accustom the minds of the monks to mathematical demonstrations, lest they should look for the same on other subjects.

The foregoing studies are considered but a prelude to the study of dogmatical theology. To this point, all others tend, and to acquire a perfect knowledge of this, monks spare neither time nor labor. It being that which properly belongs to their profession, they endeavour to acquire a thorough knowledge of it, and if their individual talents keep pace with their perseverance, they generally succeed. It has been remarked, that "*monks of the least exemplary life*, are generally the best Theologians." This remark has certainly its foundation in truth, for the name of "*good Theologian*" is a passport to arrive at the highest honors of the order, and therefore the ambitious, who are very seldom void of talents, direct all the energies of their minds to the acquisition of that, which will be the probable means of satisfying their darling passion. It must not be supposed, however, that a greater knowledge of God and his attributes, which a good Theologian is supposed to possess, necessarily includes also a greater love for God Himself. This would probably be the case, if the object for which theology is studied, was the advancement of God's kingdom, and not the exaltation of *self*; but the latter being manifestly the real object, the knowledge derived from it never goes farther than the understanding, and is therefore incapable of touching the heart.

Besides, the theology of the church of Rome is in itself corrupt, and has a strong tendency to make the student forget the subject of it—or what at least ought to be the subject of it—God; while his mind is employed in unravelling the intricate and dispu-

table doctrines, which, not having any foundation in revelation, are enveloped in obscure and unusual forms of expression. The authority of Thomas Aquinas, called the "Angelic Doctor" or of the "Seraphic Doctor" Bonaventure, are esteemed by them of equal weight with the express words of revelation. Texts of scripture, without their contexts, which would *bestow on* them a very different meaning from that which they bear, when they stand alone, are brought forward in support of some particular tenets; whilst all and every subject is treated on after the old, syllogistic method, which confounds the understanding without increasing the love for God, or implanting in the mind a desire of being guided by the divine influence of the Spirit of truth.

The portions of Scripture which are brought forward to strengthen any particular doctrine, are all mutilated, that is, such as, taking them apart from the context, seem to favor the doctrine which is disputed *upon*, but if there can be no portion found, which however twisted and turned, yet still refuses to answer the occasion, then the doctrine is established on the strength of tradition, or on the "ipse dixit" of a pope; and not unfrequently on quotations from the apocryphal writings. Thus—and let one example serve for all, as this book is not designed for controversy, but for a simple history of things as they are—the doctrine of purgatory is defended by arguments taken from tradition, not even excepting Pagan, Jewish and Mahometan, for, indeed, popish theologians are not over *delicate* in selecting their authorities, provided these authorities favor their views. Quotations are then taken for its support from the Apocrypha, especially from 2 Maccabees xii. 43, 44, 45, and after these, they endeavour to make the New Testament speak in its favour, quoting from Matt. xii. 31, 32; 1 Cor. iii. 15; 1 Pet. iii. 19.

They care but little that the books of Maccabees have no evidence of inspiration; they answer their ends and therefore are adopted. The quotations from the new testament, upon examining the context, will be found to favor as much the *metempsychosis* of Pope Pythagoras, as the purgatory of Pope Joan.

It will be no wonder, then, to find Theologians any thing but pious men, when such a system of Theology as that we have been describing, is taken into consideration. Indeed, they seem conscious themselves of this want of piety; as may be gathered from their condemning many propositions, which were probably designed for them, by the friends of vital godliness. Thus, the negative answers, to the following questions are condemned by them as heretical. "Whether the religious knowledge acquired by a wicked man can be termed theology?" "Whether a vicious person can in effect obtain a true knowledge of religion?" "Whether the office and ministry of an impious ecclesiastic can be pronounced salutary and efficacious?" "Whether a licentious and ungodly man can be susceptible of divine illumination?" These and many such like propositions are condemned in the usual form, as "*scandalous, heretical, smelling of heresy, offensive to pious ears,*" &c., by those, who fear for themselves, and feel conscious, that if they were not condemned they themselves would be no longer neither theologians nor religionists, nor efficacious priests, nor susceptible of divine illumination.

The polemical divinity of the church of Rome, under which head are classed the works of all those who endeavour to defend the doctrines of that church against the reasonings and scriptural objections of the friends of the Gospel, is also studied with great attention by monastic orders. There are professorships established in two and sometimes four places of



every province, where all those young monks, who are in possession of superior talents, are sent to learn the manner of defending their religion against the attacks of *heretics*. It frequently happens, that the young men chosen for this study are already far gone in infidelity, and therefore laugh in their own minds, and even among themselves at the idea of being made defenders of a religion, in which they do not believe. The metaphysical reasonings of dogmatical theology, united to the fables of the breviary, were the chief means of leading them into infidelity, whilst it is very probable that the study of *polemics* will give them a knowledge of reformed Christianity, and thereby make them suspect, that Christianity *might possibly* be true, though it had been corrupted by the church of which they are members. This, however, does not always happen. Those who are confirmed infidels only find new arguments in favour of the religion of nature, by becoming acquainted with the numerous sects and parties unto which Christianity is divided, and laugh at them all accordingly. Being obliged for self preservation to dissemble their real opinions, they imagine, that they cannot show their zeal for the Roman Catholic religion in a better way, than by impugning the doctrines of Gospel Christians, and defending those of popery; "for if it be necessary," they argue thus, "that Christianity should exist, it is preferable for us to stand fast in that particular kind of it, to which we are professionally engaged, and from which benefits accrue to us, than to interest ourselves in any other to which we are equally indifferent, and from which we can expect nothing but persecution and hardships—the sure consequences of leaving that by which we get our living." Others there are, who become cured of infidelity; yet fear to openly embrace the doctrines of the Bible. They pant after the freedom of worshipping

God according to the dictates of their consciences and anxiously wait for an opportunity of throwing off the yoke of monkery and popery, without running any personal risk. They, in the mean time, until such an opportunity presents itself, endeavour to separate Christianity from the dust, with which it is surrounded in the church of Rome, and whilst conforming themselves outwardly, to all the practices of that church, they inwardly, as far as they are able, serve God according to the way he has marked out in his Holy Word. Their sermons and other clerical duties, are not performed for the purpose of increasing the adherents of the church of Rome, or of propagating its particular tenets; but for that of drawing sinners to repentance, and to an unadulterated knowledge of Christ, at least as far as they can do so without exciting suspicion. Of this description of monks was the young man of Chambery, whose sufferings and final triumph have been already related. Many more also of the same kind might be found, who only wait for an opportunity to regain their liberty, in order to become pious and zealous Christians, and faithful preachers of the Gospel of salvation.

Moral theology is the last in order, though not in importance, of monastic studies. By this monks are fitted up to stand in the place of Christ, in the confessional, and to weigh with scrupulous nicety the degree of sinfulness attached to the words, actions, and even thoughts of those who are so foolish or so led astray, as to trust to the absolution pronounced by them for the pardon and remission of their sins. By this they are taught the way of bringing the minds of the people wholly under their controul, and of exercising the acquired influence to the advantage of their order and of themselves. Of all the corruptions in the corrupt system of popish corruptions, this is the most corrupt. As

preachers of corrupt doctrines, their influence over the people would never pass the bounds of moderation, as doctrines that fear the light cannot be so well promulgated in a public church—and by such chiefly is their influence acquired; but by the institution of auricular confessions they have acquired ingress into the minds and souls of each individual, and never fail, after becoming master of their secrets, to turn and direct the current of their thoughts and actions to one great object—a firm reliance on the truth and infallibility of the church of Rome; which reliance being once established, they can then turn the minds of their penitents to do any thing, however offensive to God, which, according to them, may be of advantage to the church. The miserable man, who had been excited to assassinate Henry IV. of France by a Jesuit confessor, may be an example of the truth of this observation. Very probably the assassin was a superstitious bigot, and the representations of his confessor who well knew how to work on his weak mind, excited his frenzy against the king, whom he was led to believe *a heretic, and an enemy of religion*. He therefore imagined, that so far from offending God by killing a heretical King, he was only acquiring merit, and doing an action which would be very pleasing to the Supreme Being.

On auricular confession is founded the vulgar belief of the great power of priests. It is natural for the human mind to regard with a degree of veneration the person of one, who, it is led to think, represents the person of Jesus Christ in his ministerial office, and who has the faculty of forgiving or retaining the sins of the people. The priests, well aware of this delusion, under which the people lie, let no opportunity slip of increasing it, and whilst *tête à tête* and alone with their penitents, they have every opportunity of inculcating without fear of con-

tradition, the most absurd doctrines, and of giving them at the same time a most exalted idea of their own power and greatness.

## CHAPTER XV.

Continuation of remarks upon Moral Theology—Mortal and venial Sins—Precepts of the Church—Prohibition to sell Flesh-meat on Fridays and Saturdays—Punishment of those, who transgress the Precept of Fasting—Confession and Communion—Sentence of Excommunication—Number of Popish Sacraments—The Eucharist—Anathema of the Council of Trent against all, who deny the Real Presence—Absurdity of that Doctrine—One hundred thousand Christs created every day—Popish Inventions for the support of the Doctrine of Transubstantiation—The Miraculous Corporal—Miraculous Particle—State of the Jews at Rome—A mule's testimony to the truth of the Real Presence—Anecdote of Rabelais—Sale of masses—Cost of a high mass—Reflections—The treatise upon Oaths—No Faith to be kept with Heretics—Dispensing power of Priests—Murder of Protestant Clergymen in Ireland—Jesuitical Morality.

THIS moral theology, the principal use of which, I have endeavoured to give an idea of above, is in itself a huge mass of opinions given by monks, friars and other kinds of priests, on the tendency the actions of their fellow creatures have to hinder or give claims to salvation. If all the books which were written on this subject, were gathered together, they would probably amount to some thousands of volumes! As it is, they cannot be digested even for school use, into a less compass than two large-octavos. The whole system is evidently founded on two unscriptural tenets: salvation by works; thereby rendering of no avail free salvation through the

merits of Christ; and the equally unscriptural doctrine of the distinction between sins; some being denominated mortal and others venial. By reason of this distinction of sins, the various ways in which man may transgress against the Supreme Being and against His laws, and the various degrees of sinfulness attached to such transgressions, are examined with the greatest exactness. One of the treatises (the whole is divided into separate treatises,) and a long one it is too—is taken up in examining the ends of men's actions; that is, of the motives for which such actions are performed. According then, as such actions, though essentially good or bad in themselves, may be performed for a good or evil end or motive, or as one or the other may predominate in them, they are pronounced either mortal or venial, indifferent or neutral by those self-constituted judges between man and his God. Let the assassination of Henry IV, to which allusion has been made in the last chapter, serve for an example in illustration. Murder is in itself evil; as no one will deny. But if the end, for which murder is committed be to prevent greater evils; murder is then, no longer *murder*, no longer evil. Henry was assassinated, because he was an enemy of the church; so far then from his murderer having committed sin in murdering him, the end for which he did it, fully justified him. Such is Jesuitical theology, founded on this abominable principle: "The end justifieth the means!"

The "tractatus de preceptis ecclesiæ" or, treatise on the commandments of the church, is another part of the moral theology, by which Rome teaches her clergy to domineer over the consciences of the people. These precepts are seven in number, and although far, very far, indeed, from having any portion of the Divine Word to enforce the observance of



them, they are yet commanded by those tyrants over Gospel liberty to be observed, with the same scrupulousness, and under the same penalty as the commandments of God himself. The number of fasts; the food to be used in time of lent, the quantity of same food; whether to be taken morning or evening; how those are to act, who are in a delicate state of health; the age at which children are bound to observe lent; whether nurses, who have young children at their breasts be free from the precept; each and every one of these minutiae and many more of equal absurdity, are discussed, and judgment passed on all those who do not observe them with the greatest precision. The due observance of saint-days, the confession of sins to a priest, the receiving the eucharist at least once a year, and the payment of tithes, are all and each commanded under pain of mortal sin. A minute detail of each of the foregoing precepts, and of the degree of sinfulness attached to their non-observance, would be quite uninteresting to the reader. Be it sufficient, then, to say, that when conscience and the fear of committing mortal sins are not sufficient to make them be observed by the people, the secular arm is called in to regulate the errors of conscience. In Rome, no flesh-meat is sold in the public markets on Fridays or Saturdays, nor during the whole of lent, unless at two or three stalls, which are licensed by the government, on paying a great fine, to sell it to those who have a written permission from their respective parish priests, or from other clerical superiors to make use of meat at such times; which permission the latter never give, unless when well paid for it. At the public restaurants and hotels, unless at those frequented by English travellers, it is not permitted to cook flesh-meat on fast days; and should the parish priest have any cause to sus-

pèct that flesh-meat is eaten on such days in the private houses of any of his parishioners, he is at liberty to break into the privacies of domestic circles and bring the offenders to justice, or rather *injustice*. Many cases of public punishment for transgressing this precept of fasting, are on record; but one in particular, which was related to me by an eyewitness is so glaringly unjust and cruel, that I cannot refrain from relating it. "A young man travelling on foot from Acquapendente to Rome, retired during the heat of the day, it being summer, to an *osteria*, or obscure inn, on the road, to repose and take some refreshment. Having brought from home, for the sake of economy, some bread and meat; he opened his wallet, and began his repast, the host supplying him with a bottle of wine. He had not half-finished his repast, when two Carabinieri, or policemen, came into the same tavern, and seeing him doing what was not lawful to be done on a fast-day—eating meat—they immediately took him prisoner, and conveyed him to Rome between them. He was brought before the court the next day and condemned to pay a penalty of fifty Scudi, or dollars; or if unable to pay the fine, to suffer one hundred lashes on the spot where he had eaten the meat, and be kept two months with a chain to his leg at the public works, and confined by night in the castle of St. Angelo. The latter sentence was executed to a tittle, whilst mine host was fined fifty scudi also, for allowing meat to be eaten in his house on a day prohibited by the church." Had the same young man been found guilty of maiming one of his fellow-creatures, or of robbing him of his property, his punishment would not be severer, if indeed so severe, as the one inflicted for daring to transgress the precepts of the church—though the former transgression be against the laws of God; the latter against the laws of man only.

Those who neglect to go to confession, and receive the sacrament at least once a year, are also punished by the secular arm. Their names are affixed to the gate of the church, and they are forbidden to enter it, till they are reconciled to the priest. If they continue obstinate, they are then formally and solemnly excommunicated. The ceremony of excommunication is performed in the following manner. The parish priest attended by a deacon, sub-deacon, and acolythist comes forward, dressed in white, and advancing to the lowest step of the altar, reads the following: *Ego hujus parochiæ præsul, juxta potestatem mihi concessam ab episcopo diocesano, et ex auctoritate summi pontificis, his presentibus communione fidelium privo, et ab eadem separo* N—— in hac parochia domiciliantem propter——; *et omnes fideles cujuscumque gradus, status, sexus vel conditionis ab ejusdem consortio, colloquio &c. prohibeo sub pæna excommunicationis majoris ipso facto incurrendæ ab iis contrafacientibus, vel contradicentibus. Et sicut extinguuntur hæc lumina altaris Dei, sic etiam ab eodem aufertur omnis spes futuræ vitæ, et post mortem, ejus cadaver careat sepultura christiana. Amen.* I, the parish priest of this parish, according to the power conferred on me by the bishop of the diocess; and by the authority of the supreme pontiff, deprive and separate from the communion of the faithful, N——, residing in the parish, on account of \* \* \* \* (here the cause of the excommunication is assigned,) and prohibit all the faithful of whatever rank, station, sex, or condition, from holding any intercourse, or connection &c. with the same, under penalty of excommunication, which will be incurred by those so acting. And as these candles of God's altar are extinguished, so also is every hope of future salvation taken away from the same; and let his body be deprived of Christian

burial after death. Amen. As the parish priest reads the foregoing, the candles are extinguished one after another by the attendants. The sentence is afterwards printed and affixed to the gate of the church and in the other public places of the parish.

The sentence of excommunication is not withdrawn without great trouble and expense on the part of the excommunicated. He is in the mean time shunned by every one, and even by his own family. If he has a wife, she is not allowed to speak to him or eat at one table with him. If he has children, they are under the same prohibition. If he be a poor man, and dependent on his daily labor for subsistence, his work is withdrawn, and he is very likely to die of starvation, if the sentence of excommunication be not soon taken off. Having at length satisfied the priest in every thing, he is placed kneeling on a white cloth at the foot of the altar, and his back being made bare, he is whipped by the priest singing, or repeating the psalm "miserere," and all this, in presence of the assembled congregation. He then asks pardon of the priest, and people, for the scandal and bad example, which he had given, and having received absolution, he is allowed to partake of the sacrament, and thus becomes fully reconciled to the church. It is a very common thing to find the sentence of excommunication affixed to the church-doors of Rome and of the Roman state at different periods of the year, but more especially after Easter; for this is the stated time, at which the inhabitants are *obliged* to make their annual confessions, and receive the sacrament. It may be easily imagined then, how many, in order to escape punishment, go through the form of confession and communion with their hearts far removed from the love of God and of his religion. A great many, especially those of the learned professions, perform

the ceremony with the greatest indifference, being confirmed infidels, and only watching an opportunity of throwing off the mask of hypocrisy. And how could they act otherwise, than with indifference, when they are forced to perform what they do not believe in? Adoration is a free will offering, and by no means acceptable to the Deity, unless it proceeds from the free, unforced agency of the giver. God wishes the religion of the heart; how then can he be pleased with that, which the outward man is forced to give him?

There are other treatises comprised in this system of moral theology, particular mention of which would be found quite uninteresting to the readers. I cannot however forbear making some few remarks on the "*tractatus de sacramentis*" or, the treatise on the sacraments. These are seven, according to the belief of the Roman Catholic church: viz. baptism, confirmation, eucharist, penance, extreme-unction, holy orders, and matrimony. More than usual pains are taken by popish Theologians in defending and upholding the number, and efficacy of these sacraments. Each of them is argued upon in separate and distinct treatises, and huge folio-volumes are written upon some of them; so much labor, and trouble does it require to give to error the appearance of truth! They are all and every one deemed essential to salvation; though it may be asked, how that can be established; whereas laymen do not receive the sacrament of orders, and priests cannot receive that of marriage? This difficulty however is got over by a distinction (popish Theologians are great hands at distinctions) between universality and individuality, that is, they are essential to the church universally, though not to each individual of the church. How much more honest would it be to expunge the two last wholly from the number of the sacraments,



than to have recourse to such a forced distinction! But this cannot be done, for then the church would acknowledge itself to have erred; and what then would become of its claims to infallibility.

The sacrament of the eucharist or last supper is especially dwelt upon at unusual length, and proped by a host of arguments—some taken from scripture, others from tradition, others from revelations made by some departed saints to some monks in this world, and not a few, from miracles performed to give testimony of its institution in the sense in which it is understood by Roman Catholics. It is well known to every one; or if it be not, it should be known, in order to judge of the value of an anathema; that the council of Trent anathematizes every one, who would dare say, that in the sacrament of the altar (thus the last supper is called,) “there is not really present the body and blood of Christ.” Roman Catholics believe, therefore, that after the words of consecration “hoc est corpus meum” “this is my body” pronounced by the priest, the whole substance of the bread is changed into the body of Christ, and likewise, that the whole substance of the wine is changed into His blood, after the consecrating words “hic est calix sanguinis mei, &c.” “this is the cup of my blood.” It is evident, that nothing can be more contradictory to Scripture, or to common sense than this doctrine; the words “this is my body” “this is my blood” being mere figurative expressions, as any one may perceive, who is not blinded by ignorance and superstition. Besides, such a transubstantiation is so opposite to the testimony of our senses, as completely to undermine the whole proof of all the miracles by which God hath confirmed revelation. By it, the same body is alive and dead at one and the same moment, and may be in a million of different places,

whole and entire at the same instant of time; part of Christ's body is also made equal to the whole. If this be true, what difficulty is there in saying, that all the other miracles, which are related in the gospel, were only tricks of legerdemain, and impositions practised on the senses of those, who witnessed them. It is also contrary to the end of the institution of the sacrament, which is to represent and commemorate Christ, not to believe that he is corporeally present, as is clear from 1 Cor. xi. 24, 26. But it would be needless to waste time in refuting a doctrine, which, by its impious consequences, fully refutes itself. The priests being conscious, that on it is founded the greater part of the super-human power, to which they so arrogantly lay claim, leave no stone unturned, no argument, or appearance of argument untried, by which they may impress on the minds of their followers a firm belief in its truth.

On the belief, that the sacrament contains the real and very body and blood of Christ, is founded the sacrifice of the mass, as it is styled, by which they get their subsistence, and in which they offer Christ as a victim for the sins of the living and the dead. Although "*Christ*," if the Apostle be not mistaken, "*was (but) once offered to bear the sins of many*," and though "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*," Heb. ix. 28 and x. 10; yet he is sacrificed a hundred thousand times every day throughout the Roman Catholic world, and three hundred thousand times on the day held in commemoration of his birth; there being three masses celebrated by every priest on Christmas-day. This computation is made, supposing, that there be but one hundred thousand popish priests in the world, whereas there are probably double or treble that number. A hundred thousand Christs therefore are made every day as soon as the words of consecration are pronounced by the priests; and

were it possible to divide each particle of the bread into a million separate parts, and transfer them to so many places apart, there would be present really and corporeally as many Christs, as there are parts in the particle. A priest, therefore, in consecrating a wafer makes as many Gods, as there are infinitely small parts, into which a consecrated wafer can be divided!! No wonder, then, that men possessed of such extraordinary power—even that of making Him, who made them—should be held in such veneration by all who believe in its reality. To nurture this belief, no devices, no ingenuity is spared on their part. Being unable to fix its foundation on gospel grounds, they must have recourse to fables and lying wonders, to prodigies and miracles. Out of a great many of these, I shall select a few for the satisfaction of the reader.

In the parish church of Monte Fiascone\* there is preserved a corporal,† which is dyed red with blood, that issued from a host. The tradition annexed to this corporal is as follows: a young priest, whilst celebrating mass, often doubted of the reality of his

\* A town in the pope's dominions, and situated in that part of them, which is called "il patrimonio di San Pietro," or, the patrimony of St. Peter, from its having been bestowed to the then reigning pope by Constantine the Great, on his first embracing Christianity. The deeds of conveyance are still preserved in the church of St. John Lateran at Rome; though many are so incredulous as to doubt their genuineness. I remember to have read in one of the notes to an edition of "Orlando Furioso," printed in some heretical country—Germany I believe; in which Orlando is said to have made a journey to the moon; where he discovered among other things worthy of attention, the very identical deeds, by which this part of Italy was made over to the successors of St. Peter!

† A white linen cloth, which is spread upon the altar during the celebration of mass; so called from being honored with the supposed body of our Saviour.

power to change the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. One day in particular, this doubt attacked him during mass, with more than its usual force. After having pronounced the words of consecration, and whilst breaking the host in two (a thing always done before the priest communicates; for what reason, I don't know,) lo! blood is seen issuing from the wafer, and in such quantity, as to change the colour of the corporal, milk-white before, into a deep red. The assembled multitude then humbly prostrated themselves and adored the holy particle, which thus condescended to confirm by a miracle the truth of the doctrine of the real presence and to strengthen by the same the minds of those, who may be tempted to doubt of its truth. The priest, whom the temptation of the evil one, had led to doubt of his own power, fainted at the foot of the altar, and was borne in a state of insensibility to the sacristy. On recovering, he humbly confessed his doubts and lived ever after so holily, that he was deemed worthy after death to be enrolled among the number of saints. The corporal is preserved to this day in a case of gold, as an eternal memorial of the truth of consubstantiation; an altar having been built in the same church for its particular worship; which is called "l'altare del corporale miracoloso," or, the altar of the miraculous corporal. Many miracles are daily performed before this altar, and devotees come to worship at it from all parts of Italy. This story is preserved in the archives of the church of Monte Fiascone, and fully authenticated by the signatures of many respectable persons, who witnessed the miracle. But I fear, were these *respectable* persons to arise again from their graves after a residence there of some ages, there are many heretics, who would doubt the truth of it. Are you, reader, one of them?

In another church at Rome, known by the name

of "church of the most holy sacrament," there is preserved a particle, which changed the water of a deep well into blood. The manner, in which this happened is said to be the following: On a holy Thursday, the Jews sent one of their number to a Christian church in order that he might get possession of the Christian's God, under pretext of receiving the sacrament. The man having received the particle in his mouth from the fingers of the priest, immediately withdrew from the church without swallowing it, and carried it to the house of his Rabbi. The latter invited the other Jews to assemble next day—Good Friday, and have the pleasure of again torturing the God of the Christians. His followers assembled accordingly in great numbers, each being armed with a knife, or some other sharp instrument, in order to reduce to atoms the particle. The Rabbi himself gave it the first cut, when immediately blood began to flow from the wafer to the astonishment of all present. Fearing that the wicked deed might come to the knowledge of the authorities, they took up the particle, and threw it into a deep well; the water of which was instantaneously turned into blood, and a divine splendor was seen to encompass its mouth. This was observed by some one passing by, who immediately gave the alarm, and on search being made, the blessed particle was found, floating, on the water; and still bleeding. The Rabbi and his accomplices were obliged to confess their crime, and suffered the punishment of death, which they so well merited; having been torn asunder by the populace, whilst the wafer was carried in procession to the nearest church and deposited in the tabernacle. A church was afterwards built on the site of the Rabbi's house, and the identical wafer is still preserved in it, for the adoration of future ages.

The foregoing story was probably invented, in or-



der to find a pretence for extorting money from the wretched Jews and to excite against them the popular hatred. It is made also to answer the purpose of confirming the people's belief in the real presence by a miracle. It is well known, that the Jews have more liberty, and more justice shown them in the capital of Mahometanism, than in that of popery—by professors of the religion of the false prophet than by the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus. They are shut up, like so many malefactors, between two gates, every night in a place called “il ghetto,” by their Christian task-masters, whereas in Constantinople, they at least have the power of retiring to their homes, when they think proper, and have no gates to hinder them from access to their families, and no prisons to fear, if found in the streets after a certain hour. They are not obliged to listen to the preaching of the Turkish Mufti, under pain of fine and imprisonment, whereas at Rome they are forced\* to hear a sermon once a week delivered by some friar, in order to imbue their minds with that idolatry, though under another name, for which their forefathers were so often punished, and which Jews so generally hold in abhorrence. What I have said of their treatment in Rome, can also be said with equal truth concerning it in the other cities of Italy where they are to be found; and more especially in the other cities of the pope's temporal dominions, as Ancona, Senegaglia, Bologna, &c.

In the cathedral church of Venice, there is also

\* If they do not attend the sermon, and answer to their names, when called, they are fined and imprisoned. When they do attend, there is a man with a long pole, who strikes them if he observe their attention withdrawn from the preacher, for one moment. No wonder, then, that the Jews hate Christianity, when they have such a sample of it as this before them.

preserved in a vial the blood of our Saviour. Some say, that it is a part of the identical blood, that flowed from his wounds at Calvary, whilst others not so *credulous*, think it only the blood, which flowed from a consecrated wafer, and was collected and preserved for the veneration of the people. I shall relate one story more, fabricated for a proof of the real presence, and then quit the subject, with which, I fear, the reader is already disgusted. Some time after the reformation in Germany, a heretical painter came to Rome to perfect himself in his art, by copying after the celebrated masters, who have adorned by their works the holy city.\* Being imbued with the sacramentarian heresy, he endeavoured as far as he could without danger, to ridicule the doctrine of the real presence. One day, whilst riding through the street on a mule, he saw at a distance, a procession, carrying the viaticum† or euchar-

\* *Urbs sacra*, or holy city, is an epithet applied to Rome by many writers on ecclesiastical history, when they have need to mention that capital. Perhaps they understand "sacra" in the sense Virgil applies "*sacra auri fames*" that is, "accursed." If so, they only imitate the Tuscan expression of "*Roma santa; popoli cornuti*," holy Rome but *horned people*.

† *Viaticum*, properly means "provisions for a journey. A dying man being about to set out on a journey to the other world, is first anointed that is, he has his feet, and other parts of his body besmeared with oil, in which consists the sacrament of extreme-unction. He may, or he may not receive the Eucharist, prior to this operation which on this occasion is called "*viaticum*" as being that, which he must live upon during his journey to Heaven. Rabelais, the French wit, being asked by a friend some days before his death, if he were prepared to die? "Oh yes!" answered he, "for I have got my wallet stored with the necessary provisions, and my boots greased"—meaning that he had received *the viaticum*, and *extreme unction*. He was a Franciscan friar, whom a disgust for monkery hurled into infidelity. It is surprising, what trust is placed by Romanists

ist to a dying person. He endeavoured to turn his mule into another street, lest he should be obliged to dismount and adore it, upon coming nearer. The animal however, more devout than his rider, refused to be guided by him, and much against his will, bore him in front of the procession, where, as if to show him an example, it knelt down and devoutly adored the holy sacrament !

By such ridiculous stories as these related, is the popular superstition kept alive, and the priests' power upheld. Being unable to establish so absurd a doctrine on any part of the Divine Word, and conscious, that the belief in it forms the corner stone of their other pretensions, they spare neither conscience nor truth in their attempts to give it the appearance of a doctrine pleasing to the Supreme Being. Hence the miracles and other lying wonders invented in attestation of it; hence also the corporals, innumerable portions of blood, incorruptible wafers, and such like mummery, to be found scattered through the churches of Italy, and through other parts of popish Europe. The people thus wheedled into a belief of transubstantiation, have the most exalted opinion of the men, who are the agents of it, and accordingly give money to have it performed on their behalf, that is, they buy masses, to be celebrated according to their intention, from those traffickers in the blood of Christ. Rich men—especially such as have led a life of debauchery—leave by their will a sum of money for so many masses to be annually celebrated for the repose of their souls. Money often amassed by extor-

in extreme-unction. The first question asked by the friends of a deceased, upon being informed of his death, is "has he been anointed?" If the answer be in the affirmative, then follows the exclamation, "thank God!" Salvation through the merits of a crucified Saviour is never once thought upon!!

tion and injustice, is thus bequeathed, in hope of appeasing the divine wrath by offering *again* as a propitiatory sacrifice him, who made atonement *once for all* for the sins of the whole world on Calvary; the sacrifice being thus impiously reiterated in contradiction to the words of a dying Saviour "it is finished;" or as the Latin Vulgate has them "consummatus est. There are in Rome hundreds of priests, whose means of subsistence entirely depend upon the emolument derived from masses. They make the tour of the different churches every morning, and wherever they find the most money for their mass there they celebrate it. Two Roman Pauls—about twenty-five cents—is generally the price of a common mass, and four dollars, or more, for a high mass, or "missa cantata," which cannot be celebrated without the presence of four or five priests, who divide the money between them, after the performance, as comedians are accustomed to do with their night's benefit; the high priest receiving the largest portion, and so on according to their different ranks.

The "tractatus de juramentis," or the treatise on *oaths*, has in it something so subversive of the general good of society, especially of protestant society, that I cannot refrain from making a few remarks upon it. After explaining the nature of an oath, and the rigor with which it ought to be observed, this treatise goes on to determine the degree of sin attached to the breaking of it; what penalty is incurred by the man, who takes a false oath in attestation of an untruth, and whether one taken for the good of the church be sinful or otherwise? The latter question is that which I wish to call the attention of the reader to, in particular; as it may teach him the degree of trust and confidence which he can safely place in any oath, contract or bond entered into with any Roman Catholic, when

such oath or contract be in any way contrary to the good of the Romish church. It has been decreed by the council of Constance, and the same decree has been confirmed by divers popes, and practised upon in most places, if not in all where Roman Catholics are mixed up with Protestants; "that no faith be kept with heretics." Every Roman Catholic is at liberty, to swear to any lie, which he himself pleases, or which he is instructed to affirm, without falling into sin, provided he acts so for the good of the church. So far from such a violation of the sacredness of an oath being held as criminal, he is taught by his priest that it is meritorious and laudable. A Roman Catholic is also dispensed from executing the terms of an oath, which he may have entered into with a heretic, if the observance of such terms be hurtful to the interest of his church; and a priest when summoned before a protestant court of justice to give evidence against a co-religionist, can safely swear, though he is at the same time certain of the man's guilt, that he knows nothing whatever, concerning the case in question; and if the condemnation of the prisoner be attended with any damage to the church, he is commanded to swear positively to the prisoner's innocence. If he act otherwise, he is severely punished—perhaps suspended from his clerical duties. A Roman Catholic is not deemed delinquent when he invents any audacious calumny and confirms it by an oath, if his design be to promote the cause of popery, and to impede and cover with disgrace protestanism. Thus in Ireland the Roman Catholic periodicals teem every day with invectives against the protestant clergy as a body, and more especially against those individually, who deem it a duty which they owe to God, and society, to thwart the priests in their system of imposition, and in their settled plan



of leading to destruction and final damnation the souls committed to their charge. On this account they incur the enmity of the priests, who are not sparing of their abuse, and if nothing true (which is generally the case) can be brought forward to injure their opponents in the opinion of the public, recourse is had to false accusations, which are speedily attested by some hopeful members of their flock. This is only acting up to the principle laid down in their morality "that nothing can be sinful or unjust when the advantage of the church is at stake." But it would be well if priests contented themselves with simply forging false accusations against the conscientious ministers of the Gospel. Their zeal for the suppression of heresy, often shows itself in acts of violence against the persons of the heretics; for not unfrequently do they excite their deluded followers to insult and injure them. It is well known how many protestant clergymen were waylaid and murdered, in Ireland, of late years, and how many of their houses were burned by nightly parties of priest-ridden bigots. It has been remarked that those ministers who were the most zealous and active in the cause of Christ, were always chosen for the assassin's knife; whilst others who were indifferent to the propagation of Gospel truth, and who lived on good terms with the priest, were always saved from harm under his protecting wing. Is it not then reasonable to suppose, that the murders and outrages committed on the former, were not without the priests' knowledge, or would it be too much to say, that those acts of violence were committed at their instigation? The priests certainly connived at them, for they used every means in their power to screen the offenders from justice. But this is not all. A Roman Catholic can very easily obtain from his priest for a trifle of

money, a dispensation from performing any contract entered into with a protestant, even in things which do not belong to the church, and from the performance of which the church could not possibly receive any damage. This power is granted to the priest by a canon of his church, wherein it is expressly declared "that every oath or contract, by which a Roman Catholic is bound to a Protestant can be rendered null and void, if so it seem fit to the pope or priest." If then the protestant have no better way of making the Roman Catholic adhere to his plighted faith, than the conscience of the latter, he may be almost certain of being deceived. The scruples of conscience are soon removed on paying a half-dollar, or some other sum, according to the means of the applicant to a priest. According then to these doctrines, it is manifest, that any protestant placing confidence in the oath of a Roman Catholic, acts, to say the least of it, imprudently. Either the Roman Catholic deceives him, or he does not. If he does not, he is a Roman Catholic only in name, for he does not act up to the dictates of his church, and is unwilling to make use of her dispensing power. If he does, it is only the practical effects of the morality I have been giving a description of, and therefore no matter of wonder. Cobbett somewhere tells a story of a Cornish knave, who, before taking a false oath, which he was often in the habit of doing, was accustomed, before going to give his evidence, to promise to himself, that he would swear falsely that day. Was this Cornish knave a Roman Catholic, or did he act so by advice of the priest? It looks very like a Jesuitical prank.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Reflections upon monastic Studies—Extraordinary charity of those, who endeavour to excuse doctrinal Error—The young monk begins to see monachism, as it really is—Schools, in which he learns the secrets of Monachism—Want of decorum in reciting the Divine Office—Gradual corruption of the young Monk—Monks, *bons vivants*—The manner in which the income of convents is spent—Belly *versus* Obedience; a scene in monkish life—Cardinal Micara in jeopardy—The foregoing scene Dramatized—Calumny and detraction of Monks—Their conversation in the Refectory—Monkish luxuries obtained at the sacrifice of honour and virtue—Story of a young man, the victim of monkish calumny—Clerk of the Kitchen—Manner of punishing a bad Cook—Monkish fasting and abstinence—Lent—Dinners—Collation—Monkish false pretensions.

THE foregoing remarks on monastic studies will give the reader some idea of the way, in which monks are prepared for acting their parts in the soul-destroying drama of popery. Many protestants imagine, that most of the glaring corruptions, moral and dogmatical, which are to be found in the Romish church are more the effects of human weakness, than of any organized system established by the authority of that church. But on examining the works and opinions of popish theologians, and the canons by which these opinions are confirmed, it will be found, that no error, however great, no superstition, however derogating from the honor due to God, is left unsealed by the authority of the church itself. Monks therefore and priests of every description are taught the manner of propagating those errors, which, if they were not a component part of the doctrine of the church, would not form

a portion, and the larger portion too, of the studies, which are deemed essential to the candidates for the Roman Catholic ministry. People, therefore, who, through an excess of charity, overlook such glaring errors, or attribute them, not to the church itself, but to the liability *to err* of human nature, should first examine, if this species of charity be not rather the effect of indifference for the vital doctrines of Christianity, than of love, and desire of excusing the errors of their fellow-men. If one single erroneous practice of the church of Rome can be found unauthorized by the clergy, and head of that church; or if not expressly authorized, it can be found unfavoured indirectly, or not countenanced by them, then indeed there may be some room left for charitably hoping, that many of its absurd doctrines are the effects of popular superstition, and not the genuine teaching of the church; but until such an one be found—and I believe, that will be never—it will not be thought uncharitable to condemn the misplaced and extraordinary charity of those, who are so desirous of exercising it in favour of error.

Six years is the usual time allowed for passing through the course of study, which has been described, after which the student is examined, and if he be approved of, he obtains a licence for preaching, and for exercising the other offices attached to the priesthood. This licence can be granted by no other, than the chief-superior of the order, who is called the General; but when the subjects are at a great distance from Rome, and cannot, therefore, personally appear before him for examination, without great inconvenience, it is then sent to them on the strength of a certificate, from their local superior, of their ability and fitness. During the years of study, the young monks have also more opportunities of observing the lives and conduct of the other monks,

and of becoming more intimately acquainted with monachism, than they had, whilst simply novices. They are, during the time they are students, kept less confined, and allowed more intercourse with the older monks. This more intimate knowledge of the monastic state is generally, if not universally, attended with disgust. They were comparatively happy, while kept in ignorance of the real state of things; but now that the whole, undisguised truth is open to them, when they have no opening left for escape, having made a solemn profession; they find by experience the monastic state quite different in practice, from what it appears to the uninitiated, or to those, who judge from the theory of the rule. Where they expected to find peace, brotherly love, devotion and godliness; they discover little else than contentions, mutual hatred, superstition and impiety. Wo be to him though, who is so imprudent as to express his dislike to such a life, after having made his vows. If he wishes to have any future peace, he must dissemble his disgust, and accommodate himself to circumstances. By degrees he will soon learn to live as others do, and by long practice in the art of monkery, he will become equal and perhaps surpass others in the very things, for which he at first had so great an aversion.

The choir, refectory, conversation-room, &c. are the schools, in which the secrets and practices of monachism are very soon learned. The very little attention paid to the divine office during the time it is reciting in choir is complained of—even by the monks themselves. They are conscious, that the careless manner in which it is performed, is sufficient to destroy any degree of merit attached to it; and even taking it for granted, that the repetition of psalms in an unknown tongue can be a right way of offering homage to the Supreme Being; the inat-



tention, with which it is performed, must certainly render it rather offensive than pleasing to Him. Many monks do not understand the language in which it is recited, whilst those who do, are, for the greater part, confirmed infidels, and go through it as a part of their daily labour. The words of the prophet *Isaiah* can be justly then applied to a monkish choir—"These worship me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me." The young monk on leaving the convent, in which he passed his year of probation, where some attention is paid to decorum, at least, in the performance of this duty, feels surprised at the inattention it is gone through in the other convents. By degrees, however, he accustoms himself to this want of respect, and reverence in the worship of God, and very soon joins his brethren in snuff-taking, laughing, smiling, and in the other devices practised by them to kill the time they are obliged to give their bodily presence to the worship of the Supreme Being.

The refectory is another school, in which the young monk learns the real condition of the life he had embraced, and to which he had bound himself by his solemn profession. The table of the convent, in which he passed his novitiate, or year of probation, was frugal and temperate, and rather scanty; he will then be surprised—agreeably so perhaps—to find the tables of such convents as are not troubled with novices, groaning under the weight of the best, that the season can afford. There are no persons so fond of a good dinner as monks, and very few, who put in practice so many shameless arts to obtain one. Indeed, all Italians are fond of eating, but monks are so to a proverb; for "*mangiare come un frate*" means to fare as sumptuously, and as greedily as a friar—an expression applied to those, who are able to maintain a good table. Another proverb also

seems to hint, that friars are well known for good liveries, indeed their general appearance shows, that they are in the habit of spending more hours in the refectory, than in the choir, for they are mostly fat, corpulent men. The Italian peasantry express their idea of a fat beast of any kind—a hog, e. g.—by comparing it to a friar. “Porco grasso come un frate,” “a hog as fat as a friar,” is a common expression, and not meant to cast reproach on the profession of a friar, but used as being adequate to convey an idea of extreme obesity.

The income of the convents is principally spent in this way. If the superior should endeavour to curtail the usual number of dishes, or apply the money of the convent to any other use than in satisfying his subjects’ desire of eating, and drinking, he may be certain of incurring their hatred, and of being deposed. Letters of complaint will be written against him to the general superior at Rome, and false accusations will be brought forward to hasten his ruin. If he continue obstinate, in his purpose of withholding the desired sumptuous entertainments, attempts will even be made on his life. Examples of the latter method of avenging the wrongs of the belly are numerous: but I shall relate only one, which fell under my own observation.

In the convent of the Capuchins at Rome, the usual number of courses *every-day* is four for dinner, and two for supper, with a plentiful supply of wine, fruit, confections, &c.; though on feast-days, and other solemn occasions, the above number is increased as far as twelve and sometimes twenty! Repairs being wanted to one of the wings of the convent, Cardinal Micara, who was general of the order, at the time the things, I am going to relate, happened, determined upon withholding some of the usual courses, and apply the money thereby saved towards paying the expenses of the requisite re-

pairs. Presuming on his authority as General of the order, and supposing that no one would have the boldness to dispute the will of a cardinal, he thought it needless to consult the other friars, or to ask their consent, on the proposed measure. How much he overvalued his authority and the deference due to him as a cardinal, was proved in the sequel. The friars were astonished the first day, that his decision began to be put in practice, to find themselves put off with two dishes for dinner, and only one for supper. Yet they allowed it to pass over in silence, imagining that it *was* caused by some extraordinary scarcity of provisions in the market. The next day came, and the same number of courses were served up as the day before. This was followed by murmurs and whispers among themselves. They at last came to the determination, and agreed to rise in a body, and demand the reason of this unusual proceeding, should it be repeated on the third day. The third day came, and with it the same dinner, as the two former. At a signal before agreed upon, each and every one arose from his seat, and clamorously demanded the reason of being obliged to dine on two courses, contrary to the rules and regulations of the convent. The superior endeavoured to appease the tumult, and began to explain that such was the general's order; but had not proceeded far in his discourse, when he received a blow from a bottle thrown at him by some invisible hand, which stunned him and soon covered him over with blood and wine; the bottle having been broken against his head. The confusion now became general; bottles, decanters, tumblers, plates and dishes, flew about in all directions. The superior, after recovering a little from his blow, thought it the best plan to make good his escape, which he at length effected after receiving a few more wounds, from the missiles

that were thrown at him. He proceeded to the cardinal's apartment, and related to him what was going on in the refectory. The cardinal hastened to the scene of action, but his presence was hailed by a volley of jugs, and tumblers, and he also was very glad to run for his life, after receiving three cuts—one of them from a knife—which confined him to his bed for some weeks after. On regaining his own apartment, he dispatched one of his servants for the police, who immediately surrounded the convent, and through their exertions, peace was in some degree restored. There was much blood spilt, and not few of the combatants carry marks of the wounds received in this engagement to this day, if they be living, and I have little doubt, but they are. The convent was placed under an interdict, till the ring-leaders could be discovered. The affair was very soon spread through the whole city, and found its way into the French newspapers. It was afterward made the subject of a tragi-comic opera, and acted with great applause at many of the French theatres. The principal and leading character in the play was *Cardinal Micara*, dressed in the habit of his order. In the first act, he is represented plotting with other aged monks against the bellies of his subjects, and bargaining with the undertaker for the repairs of the convent. The second act introduces the assembly of monks laying plans for resisting the inroads made on their daily allowance of delicacies, and binding themselves by a solemn engagement, ratified by a glass of wine, to resist to the last. The third and last acts represents the scene of action; the coming of the cardinal into the Refectory, his sermon on obedience, his wounds, his flight, &c. This monkish brawl was followed by serious injury to the private interest of the cardinal; for he was obliged to resign his office of nuncio to the court of St.



Cloud, to which he was appointed by Leo XII. some time before. He was well aware, that the scandalous scene, in which he bore so conspicuous a part, would not be very easily erased from the minds of the French, and consequently, not to put himself in the way of ridicule, he very prudently resigned his nunciature.\*

The refectory is also the place where the young monk learns from the example of others, to murmur against, and calumniate his absent acquaintances. No people are so given to backbiting and detraction as monks, and none exercise it so freely as they do, whenever an opportunity presents itself. In the refectory especially, whenever reading is dispensed with—and this very frequently happens, five days in the week perhaps—their conversation is made up entirely of criticism on the conduct and actions of some unfortunate monk of their acquaintance, who is not present to defend himself. If an indifferent person were present, or one unacquainted with monachism, and its customs, he would imagine that the person, on whom the conversation turns, is a monster of iniquity, and unfit to bear the name of man. Indeed, it seems, that the chief end for which they were created, was for giving pain to their fellow-creatures; and if it were, they could not pursue a better course, than the one daily followed, to arrive at that end. A subject for conversation being started, by the superior perhaps, relative to the conduct of Father *This*, or Brother *That*, every one hastens to make his own remarks upon it, and draws

\* The above description of the drama, I had from a French gentleman who assured me, that he himself saw it acted on the theatre of Marseilles. I have no reason to doubt the truth of his assertion, though I never saw a copy of it myself, nor ever knew any other person who saw it acted.



forth from his retentive memory some past failing or other of the unfortunate monk's. Thus they continue eating and murmuring, drinking and calumniating, till the signal is given for returning thanks. Then all arise, and the superior begins the form of prayer for the occasion with the words "tu autem, Domine, miserere nobis" "pity us, O Lord;" as if the Lord could be pleased with men, whose only and greatest pleasure lies in gratifying the brutal passions of eating to excess, drinking in proportion, and tearing asunder the characters of their absent brethren. It is not enough for them to indulge their bodies in feeding upon the meat obtained at the expense of every principle that ennobles human nature, but they must also indulge their spleen and rancour—the most hateful passions of the mind—in taking away the good name of some of their fellow victims—for they are all victims to the detestable, unchristian system of monkery. Nor let it be thought too bold an assertion to say, that their meat or living is obtained at the "expense of every principle that ennobles human nature;" for what can be more debasing to the human mind, than to yield an implicit, blind obedience to one, who, it feels conscious, very often commands things quite at variance with its own innate sense of right? Is not the whole life of a monk one, uninterrupted scene of lies and imposition? Is he not daily acting the part of an impostor and hypocrite, when at the command of an atheistical superior, he teaches doctrines in which he does not believe himself? And to what else do all these labors and pains in the service of Satan, and in bringing the souls of his fellow-men under the grasp of that enemy; to what else, I say, do they tend than to obtain wherewithal to satisfy the factitious, and artificial wants of inordinate desires? To supply the refectory

with more than is often thought necessary for the tables of princes! If this be not obtaining bread at the sacrifice of virtue and truth, I do not know what is! Human nature is therefore debased, and he cannot be a good monk, who does not sacrifice every generous feeling, every principle, by which man is rendered superior to the brute, at the monstrous shrine of monkery.

I have already, in another part of this book, given some examples of the evil effects following persecution; I shall now relate one illustrative of another branch of persecution—calumny or backbiting, to wit; which is near akin to persecution, with this sole difference, that the latter is conducted openly, and in the face of all, whereas the former is carried on privately, and the subject of it very seldom becomes aware of his danger till he finds himself on the brink of ruin.

A young monk, whose name I do not now recollect, though I was slightly acquainted with him, being sent by the general to preach at a village in the Campagna di Roma, took up his residence at the house of a respectable inhabitant of that village, where there was a young woman, a daughter of the master of the house. It happened, that he fell dangerously ill before the end of the lent,\* and being unable to remove to his convent, he was obliged to remain at the forementioned house till after his recovery. During his illness he was treated with the greatest attention by every member of the family, and by no one more so, than by the young woman,

\* Lent is the only season of the year in which there are sermons every day in the churches of Italy. At other times, except a panegyric on a saint, or sermon in praise of the Madonna, the *entire devotion* of the people is spent on the dramatic mummery of the mass, or some other unscriptural ceremony.

who was the mistress of it; her mother being dead. On being reinstated in health, he was diffuse in his thanks to the gentleman and his daughter for their kind treatment; and as a more substantial proof of his gratitude, he presented the latter with a valuable gold ring, which he bought designedly for that purpose. But *that* ring was the beginning of his misfortunes. The young woman, not even thinking, at this time, of any thing improper, made no secret of the ring, and showed it to a great many of her acquaintances, and among others, she showed it to another monk of the same order with him, from whom she got it. He being a private enemy of the other, and only waiting for an opportunity of bringing something forward, that might injure him, soon told it to a second, with some additions; the second *then* told it to a third, and it went from one to another in this way, until it became at length the table-talk of the entire province. It at last reached the General's ears only a few days before the young monk himself was publicly upbraided by one of the other monks with whom he had some falling out, with having debauched the young woman, and of having given her a ring in token of his love. This accusation, of which he knew himself innocent, struck him speechless, and his silence was construed by the others into a tacit confession of his guilt. He was sent for to make his appearance at Rome before the General, and answer the accusation. He appeared, and denied having had intercourse with the young woman, requesting at the same time to know the authors of the calumny. The General replied, that the ring, which he had given her was a sufficient proof of his guilt, and that the young woman herself confessed to her father, that she was with child, and that she had been violated by him. The young man knew not what to do, and being unable to bring forward anything

in proof of his innocence, he was suspended from the priesthood, and sent a prisoner to the dungeon of the inquisition at Corneto, there to live confined the remainder of his life. His innocence, however, afterwards appeared, for the young woman, brought to the grave in giving birth to a child, being seized with remorse, confessed publicly before her death, that she had falsely accused the young monk, and that she had been betrayed by another young man, who paid his addresses to her, and afterwards deserted her. She also confessed, that she laid the crime of seduction to the charge of the monk, being excited to do so by her confessor, who told her, that she would be received into a nunnery after the birth of her child, if she could prove, that she had been violated by an ecclesiastic. The most extraordinary circumstance in this story is, that the confessor, who gave the young woman this perfidious advice, turned out to be the young monk's secret enemy, and the most active propagator, and indeed the first inventor, of this most scandalous falsehood. So much for the conscience of confessors, who hold the office of judges between God and man! The young monk was afterwards released from prison, and obtained leave from the Pope to leave the order altogether. What became of him <sup>and</sup> after his secularization, I never could learn, as he quitted the Roman state and retired to Lombardy, his native province.

This young man's character was torn asunder a million of times in every refectory of the province, before the false accusation reached his own ears; and I remember to have seen joy sparkling in the eyes, and breaking forth from the countenances of his fiend-like calumniators, whilst discussing this, to them, pleasing subject. Many other crimes were also laid to his charge, which never existed but in the treacherous minds of his accusers, and calumnia



tors. They knew very well, that if the first accusation could be made good, all other accusations however improbable they might be, would *be easily credited*. They, therefore, in order to satisfy their malicious dispositions, and to give food to their hellish appetite for the misery of others, scrupled not to lay to the charge of one that never offended or injured them, crimes of the most enormous dye—and all this for the fiendish satisfaction of triumphing over a fallen brother, whom they should rather have endeavoured *to reform* than to calumniate—if they were possessed of the smallest particle of that, to which they so audaciously lay claim—Gospel perfection.

Another subject of discussion in the refectory, is the quality of the food, and the manner in which it is prepared. Many monks are excellent cooks, and though they do not perform the laborious part of cookery, yet they give their directions and superintend the business of the kitchen, with great attention—much greater perhaps than they bestow upon the works of the ministry. There is always appointed in each convent a superindendent of the cooking department, or clerk of the kitchen, whose duty it is to give directions to the lay-brothers, who are the working cooks, of the manner in which such and such dishes should be prepared, and according as he may perform this office to the satisfaction of the other monks, his future promotion to the higher dignities of the order depends. If dinner be badly prepared, a general murmur ensues, and the poor cook is immediately called upon to render an account of his want of attention. If he can give no satisfactory reason for the soup's being too salt, or badly tasted, or the meat's being over-boiled, or half-raw, he is liable to be instantly punished by the superior. Sometimes, the clamour against him is



so great, especially if he should fail in his cooking two or three times successively, that the monks inflict punishment on him with their own hands, and thus, in a summary way, take vengeance for the trespasses, which his carelessness, or want of skill committed against their palates. This, however, seldom occurs, as they usually leave it to the superior to decree, what punishment is due to so great an offender. The punishment more frequently inflicted on him is the *discipline*, and bread and water for dinner, which he must eat on his knees. The discipline is a sort of punishment, which cannot but appear strange to the generality of people in this country; it may not then be thought foreign to the subject to give a short description of it, especially, as it is only among monks that *bad cooking* is punished with the *lash*.

The monk having received his sentence, whilst on his knees in front of the seat occupied by the superior, kisses the ground in token of humility and obedience. He then retires to the farthest corner of the refectory, and kneeling down, draws his habit over his head, by which his bare back is exposed, and with a cord prepared for that purpose, begins the act of flagellation, singing in the meantime the "miserere," which being finished, he draws down the habit again, and having put it in order, proceeds to the head of the table, where the superior is seated, and asks pardon, first from him, and then of the other monks for the fault he had committed. He then returns to his own place, and taking the bread and water from the table, he places them before him, and having first asked leave from the superior, commences his dinner. The other monks, all this time, continue in their seats; and enjoy the satisfaction of seeing him punished, with feelings rendered still more hostile by having their dinner spoiled through the culprit's carelessness.

This punishment is seldom inflicted for any other fault than that of bad cooking. Indeed, this is considered one of the greatest crimes, of which a monk can be guilty, and is, therefore, punished with unusual severity. If, however, the cook should still continue to send to the table badly cooked or unsavoury dishes, he is then dismissed altogether from that office, as being one incapable of performing it, and transferred to some other of less responsibility; or, if he be not professed, he is dismissed from the order altogether, as one likely to be of no advantage to it.

The lent, or lents, for some orders have more than one, are passed in the same round of feasting as any other part of the year. The only difference is, that fish takes the place of flesh. If the expense be looked to, a dinner of the latter is far more expensive than one of the former. The same number of dishes is served up, consisting of different kinds of fish, or if different kinds cannot be obtained either for love or money, then the same kind, but prepared in different ways, is used. Boiled, fried, roasted, and stewed fish is often served up at the same meal. The soup—an indispensable article in an Italian dinner—is, in lent, composed of rice boiled in almond-milk, which is so very dear, as only to be used as a delicacy at the table of the rich; yet monks, who, by their vows, are sworn to observe a life of poverty and abstinence, think it no sin to vie with the rich in delicacies of this kind. Supper in lent, or collation as it is called, on account of its being something less than an ordinary supper, i. e. a monk's supper, consists of only one plate of fish and some sallad. Monks make a great noise in the world about their fasting and abstinence, and about the severity with which lent is observed within the walls of their convent; but a peep within the scene will soon convince any unprejudiced observer, that

their fastings, &c. like many other of their practices, cannot bear the public eye. They, therefore, put on mortified countenances, when they go out, and report in every place they visit, that their diet in lent is wholly made up of oil and herbs; thus adding lying, as they usually do in other things, to hypocrisy in this also. So far from the observance of lent being considered as a penance, many of them, who prefer fish to flesh-meat, long for its arrival, being sure of satisfying their desire of eating at that time, with more *gout*, than at any other season of the year.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Effects of bad example—Its effect on the Author's mind—He seeks the advice of his Confessor—The Confessor's Apology for the vices of his Order—A word of Advice from the same for the Author's private use—Tampering with the Consciences of others, as practised in the Confessional—The Author practises upon his Confessor's Advice—Falls into Infidelity—Argues publicly against the Existence of God—Becomes an object of suspicion to his fellow Monks—Search made in his room for heretical Books and Papers—Johnson's Dictionary convicted of Heresy—Ordination—Number of Orders in the Romish Church—In what the Candidate for Ordination is examined—Character of Monsignor Macioti, Suffragan-Bishop of Villettri—Episcopus in partibus.

IN such a school as this, the young monk, just freed from the restraint in which he had been held during the year of probation, soon learns to forget whatever good principles he may have imbibed from the precepts, and instruction of his master-novice. Those instructions, though tending to form

erroneous ideas of things, and to judge falsely of matters bearing a near relation to the good of society, and to his own eternal welfare, were at least clothed in the garb of truth, and had the power of restraining him in some degree from open acts of impiety. But the evil doings of the other monks, their murmurings, their love of defamation, their insatiable desire of indulging in sensual gratifications, especially in those of the table, and their lukewarm, not to call it *impious* manner, of going through the services, which are intended, however erroneously, for the worship of God; all these things united, soon make him throw aside, as useless, the principles of a religious life which he had imbibed, and plunge headlong into the vortex of corruption and irreligion, in which his fellow-monks are so deeply sunk. He may at first, perhaps, take but little part in the petty brawls, and quarrels, which agitate his brethren, and may be too scrupulous in doing gratuitous injury to those from whom he has received none; but after some years', nay, months' practice, and daily example set him by others, he will soon, too soon, take an active part in these scenes, and make himself a ring-leader in the practice of those very things which at first appeared to him so sinful, so disgusting, and so unbecoming the character of men who are dedicated to the service of God, and to the preaching of his laws to their fellow-men. But as a bad tree cannot bring forth good fruit, so also monkery, essentially bad in itself, cannot possibly be followed by any other effects than what flow from the corrupt fountain of unrestrained human passions, and from the practice of a false system of religion.

When first introduced into such scenes as these described in the last chapter, I really imagined myself removed into a different sphere of existence al-



together. I could hardly conceive it possible, that men, whose ostensible object in life is the service of God, and the edification of God's people, could act in a way diametrically opposite to the fulfilment of that object. Farther experience soon convinced me that God and his service took up the smallest portion of their thoughts, and that *self*, and the gratification of their passions, were the things which each and every one had most at heart. I soon became convinced, that the religious habit was used as a cloak to cover over their detestable vices, and that the preaching of God's word, and the administration of church rites, were used as instruments, through the medium of which they might more easily attain their desired ends. In place of realising a quiet, holy, undisturbed life, which I so fondly anticipated, I found that such a life would be more practicable in the midst of worldly pursuits than in the society of monks, and that a religious, serious deportment, so far from obtaining for its possessor love, and esteem, amongst them would only procure him hatred and ridicule. What my feelings must have been on thus finding my long cherished hopes of happiness in the monastic life, totally destroyed by becoming practically acquainted with that life itself, and how I must have regretted the vow, which I had a little before taken, of adhering to it for ever, thereby leaving to myself no opening for retraction, may be more easily imagined than described. I, for a long time, wished to persuade myself, so loath was I to be undeceived, that things which appeared to me evil and indecorous, may be in themselves harmless, or at least, indifferent, and that the evil of them consisted more in my manner of viewing them than in the things viewed. But this deception of my better judgment could not last for ever, for the more I observed them, the stronger grew the opinion of their



being any thing but in accordance with the precepts of revealed, or even of natural religion. I began, therefore, to judge more freely of the morals of my brethren, and to feel satisfied that their manner of living must appear unbecoming and indecorous to any one judging it even by the standard of natural morality, not to mind the more rigorous standard of Divine Revelation. These opinions so long resisted, and considered as temptations of the Devil, I now, that I could resist them no longer, thought it advisable to lay before my confessor, whilst seated in his tribunal—the confessional, and ask his advice thereon. I had not, at this time, entertained the smallest doubt of the truth and holiness of all and every doctrine of the Church of Rome, nor did it once enter my mind, that the course of the evil lives of the monks should be attributed to the corrupt form of religion which they professed, and of which they were the ministers. Had such thoughts occurred, I should have resisted them as temptations from the Evil One, *indeed*. I then little imagined that a time would come, when it would please the Almighty to dispel darkness from my benighted soul, and show me the way in which He loves to be worshipped, and from which way no bad effects can follow. But this happened many years after. Believing, firmly believing, indeed, in the Divine institution of auricular confession, as one of the infallible doctrines of Rome, and convinced that it was the only safe method by which sinners could be relieved of their doubts and fears, and that through it remission of sins is really obtained, I approached, with reverential awe, the judgment seat of the priest, having already resolved to make the sins of others, and not my own, the subject of my confession—to lay before him my thoughts, my opinions, my judgment, and my temptations concerning the

conduct of the other monks: He heard me very patiently to the end, and then replied, *first*, that the tribunal of penance was the place for hearing the sinner confess the sins committed by himself, and not for hearing a sinner accusing fellow sinners of sin; “but,” continued he, “as I have heard you so far, and as you have asked *my judgment—not opinion*, (this was said in character,) on the bad customs, and evil practices of our brethren, I must acknowledge that their general conduct is not in accordance with a life of Gospel purity, which their sacred character of priests obliges them to attain, and that when examined by the standard of Gospel morality, it must appear to every observer in the same sinful light it has appeared to *you*. But, dear brother, we must consider, that monks are also *men*, as well as those living in the world, and that he “who goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour,” takes more pleasure in tempting them than in tempting others; and that, withdrawing from the world, and dedicating themselves to the worship of God do not necessarily include a freedom from those passions to which all men, more or less, are subject.” He finished his apology for their vices by a word of advice directed to myself, the sum of which was, “that I should be cautious how I showed any sign of disgust, or dislike, at the conduct of others; and that now was the time, whilst young, of conciliating the favour of my brethren, by overlooking their faults, and charitably attributing them to an erroneous judgment, and the weakness of human nature, and not to premeditated intention of offending God, and injuring their fellow men. If I acted otherwise, it would be the cause of blighting my future prospects of arriving at any dignity in the order, and would bring down upon me

retaliation from the persons whose conduct I took the liberty of criticising, which would very probably cause me no small share of uneasiness and trouble."

The foregoing is the substance of the advice, as far as I can now recollect, which my confessor thought it his duty to give me. By it may be seen the iniquitous tampering with the consciences of others, practised in the confessional, and the settled plan of making the fool, who bends his knee to that seat of judgment, be reconciled to every practice, every open immorality of the clergy. A minister of Christ, one too arrogating to himself the representation of the person of Christ in his ministerial office, making an apology for the vices of his order in the very exercise of that office, is in itself horrible; but when the same minister, not content to apologise for vice, also encourages the person, whom superstition and a false notion of religion brought to his knees, in order to ask advice for his future conduct; when he encourages and exhorts such a person to conform himself to the reigning vices, or at least, to give them his sanction by passing them over in silence, under pain of injuring his future prospects of aggrandizement, or of drawing upon himself and incurring the hatred of the evil-doers, when the minister uses his authority as representative of Christ in advising—which from a confessor is the same as commanding—such abominable things as these, then indeed it must be manifest to even the most incredulous, that popish theory, as well as practice, is detestable, and that the confessional, so far from being a place, wherein the sinner is advised to abstain from sin, is converted into a place to inculcate the precept of *sinning*. This assertion will perhaps be denied by a great many unacquainted with the evil tendency of popish inventions; but let those, who have every day before their

eyes the gross immoralities of the Romish hierarchy, and who are aware, that such immoralities are the effects of theory, speak and deny the truth of it, if they can. His apology however for the vices of the order did not satisfy me, though I was weak enough to put in practice his advice. I began to conform myself by degrees to the established customs, and, from a disgusted spectator, was in a short time changed into an animated actor on the theatre of monkery. I soon learned to take pleasure in the misfortune of others, and for self-preservation, to attack when attacked, calumniate when calumniated, thwart when thwarted, murmur when murmured against; in fine, I arrived at such perfection in the art of tormenting, and in the art of sinning, that I very soon became the aggressor, without having received any provocation, and was able to beat the most experienced among them at their own weapons.

From this time, I may date my gradual fall into infidelity. I first became luke-warm in the discharge of my religious duties; to this succeeded indifference, and from indifference to infidelity, it is well known how easy is the transition. The study of philosophy, especially that part of it called metaphysics performed an extraordinary change in my mind and opinions, and directed my thoughts into a channel, in which they were unaccustomed to run. Every doctrine, however absurd, every story, however insulting to reason and wide of probability was swallowed with avidity before, but, now, I took pleasure in examining for myself, and experienced great joy, if I could invent some argument by which I might be able to prove false or improbable some leading doctrine of Christianity. I remember to have about this time—the third year of my being a monk—argued and proposed objections against the existence of God in a public disputation held for



that purpose, and to have received great applause for causing my opponent—the defender of God’s existence—(who, by the way, had hardly an ounce of brains)—to stumble and be unable to maintain his thesis. Though, I prefaced my objections with a declaration, that whatever would be brought forward by me in the heat of argument, if contrary to the received doctrine of the church, (in which I am a firm believer, I added hypocritically enough,) should not be considered as my real opinions, but used on the present occasion for the sake of exercise in the art of reasoning; I nevertheless received with heart-felt delight the applause received from those, who saw my stupid adversary unable to confute the flimsy and impious sophisms, which I urged against his thesis;—against the existence of God.\* I went farther; I even wished to persuade myself, that my arguments were invincible and unanswerable, and that they proved the whole world—from the savage to the philosopher—guilty of error, on account of giving credit to that, which, indeed, requires a far greater degree of credulity, not to believe than to believe. Thus, without understanding Christianity, or without knowing more concerning it, than what can be picked up at the corrupted fountain of popery, I was induced, partly through the scandalous lives of

\* It is lawful to dispute upon every doctrine of Christianity at the public schools in Rome, that is, the fundamental doctrines of that religion, as the divinity of Christ, the Trinity, the existence of God &c. &c., because such tenets can bear inquiry, and the more they are examined, the stronger and firmer will they become; but equal liberty is not granted for disputation upon the peculiar doctrines of the church of Rome. Thus, it is unlawful to call into dispute the supremacy of the pope, his infallibility, the divine institution of the leading doctrines of the church, &c. &c.; for these cannot bear inquiry, and must therefore be believed on the *ipse dixit* of the pope.



its ministers—the monks—and partly through giving unrestrained liberty to my fancy—not reason—for of that, I had as little as most modern infidels—to deny, first, the doctrines, which are the inventions of popery, and which, at that time I was unable to distinguish from genuine Christianity; and then, Christianity itself; having coupled in my own mind Christianity and popery—as if the one could not exist without the other!

About the beginning of the fifth year of my monkish life, very strong suspicions began to be entertained by my brethren, that I was not a firm believer in the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. These suspicions were confirmed by an outward want of attention on my part to the practice and ceremonies of religion as exercised in the convent and by many unguarded expressions which I often allowed to escape me, whilst in conversation with those whom I imagined to be, and who really were, of my own opinion. Though all monks, or at least the greater part of them, are confirmed infidels, they yet have a dislike to those, who outwardly show their unbelief; not that they have themselves any love for Christianity, but rather because they fear that an infidel and unbeliever, who has not prudence enough to disguise his real opinions, even in the presence of his associates, will not be very zealous in propagating the tenets of popery, and in consulting for the good of the order; the two things on which their influence over the minds of the people, and the emoluments necessary to their subsistence depend.

One of the monks, with whom I had a very close friendship, and in whom I placed great confidence, informed the superior privately, that I was disseminating opinions dangerous to the good of the order,

and that I had a great many heretical books in my room which he did not understand, but was sure *they could not be good, because written in English*, and also, that I was continually writing and taking extracts from the same books, which if brought to light and examined by some one acquainted with the English language, would place beyond all doubt, my having fallen off from a steady belief in the doctrines of the church. This insidious information increased the suspicion, which was already but too strong against my orthodoxy. Having, however, got a hint of it, and suspecting that a search in my room for books and papers would follow, I thought it prudent to convey my books out of the way, and commit to the flames, my papers, which were chiefly taken up with remarks upon monachism, satires upon the monks, and extracts from the books I had in my possession. I then borrowed from the convent library four or five feet of theology, two or three of councils, as many of morality and nearly a yard of legendary lore, lives of saints &c., which I conveyed into my room, and with them supplied the vacuum left by the removal of my own books. The search, as I expected, was made some days after, by the professor and local superior, but they could not help laughing, when they found nothing but theology, morality, metaphysics, legends, lives of saints &c. &c. The only book which they made any objection to, and which I thought it needless to remove, was a Johnson's dictionary. This immediately was accused of heresy, and why? Because written in English, and because they could not understand it.\* Poor Sam-

\* The greatest distrust is held of all English books throughout every part of the Roman States. I once had a bundle of "Galigani's messenger," in my hand, which an English friend had lent me, and meeting accidentally with the professor, he asked what it

uel Johnson was accordingly seized upon, and carried for trial before one of the older monks, who had a smattering of English, which he learned from some Englishman who kept a shop in Ancona, his native town. The old monk putting on his spectacles with the air of an inquisitor, examined it here and there, and casting his eyes by chance on the word "Jesuits," which is defined by Johnson "*a body of monks who presume to usurp the name of Jesus,*" he immediately pronounced it heretical. It was then given over to the superior, and I thought he was going to commit an *auto de fe* on it, i. e. burn it, but this he did not do; for he only placed it under lock and key in the library among the "*libri prohibiti*," or prohibited books.\* The storm

was. I told him, it was a bundle of English newspapers. He chided me for reading such heretical writings, observing that "thousands of English *heretics go to hell every day,*" (*vanno alla casa del diavolo ogni giorno*). So much for monkish bigotry, and the effects of the unchristian doctrine of exclusive salvation.

\* In the library of each convent, there is a place set apart for prohibited books, or those books which are censured by the master of the sacred palace, who is always a Dominican friar. The best books of every European language are prohibited, and sentence of excommunication passed against all who read them. The titles and the names of the authors of such books are collected in one volume entitled "*index librorum prohibitorum*," printed at the Vatican press annually, and given away *gratis* to the different libraries of popish Europe. This is also another emolument to the papal see, for the librarians and booksellers are commanded neither to lend nor sell prohibited works, unless to those who have a written license from the pope, to use them. This license is never granted till paid for, and thus the obtaining of it becomes a source of gain to the "infallible head" of the church. It is really astonishing, what a change money is capable of performing! It may be asked, whether reading *such a book* be sinful or otherwise; if not sinful, why then place a shackle on man's liberty by

passed over in this way, and indeed, with far less trouble than I at first thought it possible, judging from the bigotry of the monks and from the great pleasure they are accustomed to feel when an opportunity presents of enjoying the misery of others. It had even a favourable effect, for, in some degree, it dissipated the cloud of suspicion, that hung over me, and made me more cautious in future, of reposing confidence in the seeming friendship of those, who only sought an opportunity to betray.

About this period, I arrived at the age required by the canons for receiving the order of sub-deaconship; having already received the four minor orders.\* I was accordingly sent by the General to Velletri, a

prohibiting it? if sinful, how is it possible, that the bestowing a sum of money on a self-constituted authority, can make it not sinful? The reason for this, as well as for most other practices of the church of Rome, must be sought in the insatiable desire of amassing money by making the consciences of Christians a saleable commodity.

\* It may not be generally known, that in the Roman Catholic church, there are seven orders, four of which are called minor orders: *Osteriatus*, *Lectoratus*, *Exorcistatus* and *Acolytatus*. These four are conferred at a very early age, sometimes before the candidates arrive at the age of understanding the meaning of them. They are now in practical disuse, being considered as only preparatory to the receiving of holy orders; though in the ancient church, there is reason to suppose, the offices attached to them were exercised by some pious laymen of the church. According to Romish theologians, they were instituted by Christ himself, and as proof of their being so, they distort some passages of Scripture. The other three, sub-deaconship, deaconship and priesthood are called holy orders. The age at which they may be received is fixed by the council of Trent; the first at twenty one years, the second at twenty two, and the third at twenty five; though the pope has the power of dispensing with eighteen months, of the latter, which he generally does, if paid for it.

city about twenty six miles from Rome, for the purpose of having that order conferred upon me by the bishop of that diocess. The candidate for ordination is very strictly examined in presence of the bishop on some treatise of dogmatical theology, selected for the occasion by the examiners. This takes place not so much for the sake of trying whether he is possessed of sufficient information; the ignorant being as often promoted to orders as the learned; as, in order to be able to judge of the soundness of his views relative to the doctrines of the Roman Catholic church. The treatise on which I was examined, seemed as if designedly selected for my person, for it was that very one, about the truth of which I entertained the greatest doubts—"the *tractatus de ecclesia*," or treatise concerning the authority and power of the church. The doctrines discussed in this treatise being once established on a sure foundation, all the other unscriptural doctrines of popery cannot be denied, without falling into a contradiction; for if it be once granted, that the church has the power of directing and fixing the things necessary to be believed by the faithful, and of bringing in and mixing up tradition with the written Word, and also of explaining that Word itself, in favour of some new doctrine; how, then, with any consistency can any one of its tenets be denied? If it be granted with the Italian church, that the pope, in his own person, is infallible, or with the Gallican church, that a council assembled by authority of the pope, cannot err; how then can it be denied afterwards, that the things held out for belief, and established by a council or a pope, though in direct contradiction to the words and sense of divine revelation, are not sound doctrines, and not necessary to be believed by all, who adhere to the church of Christ. If the authority of popes and councils be



once granted to have its claims founded on scriptural grounds, then indeed the belief in purgatory, invocation of saints, auricular confession, and in all the other innovations made in the Christian faith by popery, must follow, if due consistency be attended to. Though fully aware of the consequences flowing from the questions proposed to me by the examiners on this subject, I yet had the weakness to dissemble my real opinions, and answer with the most scrupulous orthodoxy—that is, as orthodoxy is understood by the Romish church. To this was I obliged through fear of being refused ordination, if I answered otherwise—a certain result, followed also by personal danger—and also through fear of affording an opportunity to my brother monks of renewing their former obloquy. I was, therefore, approved of and pronounced by the examiners a fit subject for promotion to sub-deaconship, my papers being first examined, especially the certificate of my baptism, in order to be sure of my having reached the canonical age.

Not to revert to this subject again, it may be as well to mention here, that one year after this, on reaching my twenty-second year, I was ordained deacon by the same bishop, after having passed through another examination, similar to the one related above. The treatise selected on this last occasion was that, which every Italian priest is obliged to almost swear to—the treatise on the infallibility of the head of the church; as the pope is called. This is not pronounced exactly a matter of faith; for then provocation would be given to the Gallican church, to separate from the Italian, as the former does not believe in it; but it is declared a *holy* and *wholesome* doctrine, and *next to* faith—*proxima fidei*. I answered on this occasion, as on the other, according to the known opinion and teaching of the

church of Rome, and was so hypocritical as to show *a holy anger* against the boldness of the French, who dared call in question a doctrine so holy and scriptural. The bishop praised me for my zeal, and hoped, that when sent and established in my own country, I would faithfully preach and propagate the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, and endeavour to bring under the obedience of the supreme pontiff—(*sotto l'ubbedienza del summo pontefice*, were his words)—the benighted heretics of Ireland, for whose conversion he uttered a fervent prayer—more fervently I presume, than they themselves pray for that conversion. Poor heretics! My answer to this holy admonition may be easily imagined, and I passed for a pious, orthodox young clergyman, and for one, who would be very zealous in propagating the doctrines of the *Holy Roman Catholic Church*. So pleased was the bishop with my answers, and so well did I act my part, that he invited me to dine with him the next day—and gave me a letter of introduction to Cardinal Rivarola—who was a particular friend of his; which I was to deliver on my return to Rome. It is but just to add, that Monsignor Macioti, for that was the name of the bishop of whom I am speaking—was a really good and pious man; and seemed sincere in his belief of the doctrines of the church of Rome, and firmly convinced that a belief in those doctrines was most essential to the salvation of man. He was bishop *in partibus infidelium*,\* and only suffragan-

\* Episcopus in partibus infidelium, or bishop in infidel countries, is a title given by the pope to the numerous bishops without diocesses, who surround his throne. Whenever the pope wishes to exalt and do honour to a favourite; or when a priest of a rich and noble family is fool enough to throw away a large sum of money for a dignity, he is consecrated bishop of some place, taken at hazard

bishop of Velletri. The diocesan bishop, who was a cardinal, always residing in Rome, left him as his suffragan in care of the diocese; and on him, therefore, devolved the whole management of the affairs relating to the church of Velletri and its dependencies. He had very little of that pride and vain glory, which are to be found the principal ingredients in forming the character of most popish prelates. He was an humble, practical Christian, and if we except his bigotry, which was more the fault of the religion he professed, than of the man himself, he could have been held up as a shining example for the imitation of the ministers of Christ. Had he lived in another country, or had he been so fortunate as to see the errors of popery, he would certainly be considered as one blessed with an abundant share of heavenly grace. Unlike most Italian prelates, he spent his income on the poor of his flock, and not in indulging in the pleasures of the table, and other luxuries. Whilst other bishops might be found at the *conversazioni* and entertainments of the great, or gallanting, in the character of *cicesbei*, the wives of their acquaintances, his post was at the bed-side of some dying beggar; endeavouring to alleviate his sufferings, and administering the consolations, which religion, however cor-

from the map of the world, over which the pope, as universal pastor, claims authority. Thus, one is made bishop of some of the South Sea Islands, whilst another obtains a diocese in Crim Tartary. They never see their diocesses, nor do they ever trouble their heads about them; some of them often not knowing in what part of the world the place from which they take their title is situated! They bargained for the empty title, and that they have got—il fumo senza l'arrosto—the smoke without the roast—as the Italian proverb has it. The pope thus bestowing bishopricks on his courtiers strongly resembles the valorous knight Don Quixote bestowing the government of islands on his Squire Sancho Panza.

rupt it may be, always affords to the last moments of a departing sinner.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Jealousies, and enmities of Monks of different orders—Reasons for entertaining such hostile feelings against each other—Sample of monkish lampoons—The immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin—The Dominicans and Franciscans declare war against each other—Monkish imposture—Tragic story of Jetzer—The Ghost of a Dominican appears to him—Jetzer undergoes the discipline, in order to redeem his brother's soul from Purgatory—The Virgin Prior—Revelations made by the Virgin to Jetzer—He receives the five wounds that pierced Jesus on the Cross—Jetzer discovers the imposture—The Dominicans attempt to poison him—He flies from them, and seeks the protection of the civil authorities—The actors in the infernal plot burned alive—Jetzer's death—The use which the Franciscans make of the foregoing Narrative—Number of religious Orders How distinguished from each other—Division of Monks—Number of the Clergy in the capital of Popery—Number of Beggars.

THOUGH great the enmities and jealousies entertained for each other by monks living in the same convent and of the same order, far greater still are those they bear towards other monks of orders differing from their own. The greatest enemies of the same order, who would be glad to see each other at the bottom of the sea, forget their private quarrels, and unite their strength in attacking the common enemy—another religious order. To this they are excited both by the prejudices of their monkish education, which leads them to consider their own order as the one most pleasing to God, and also, by a fear of losing their emoluments, and the means of

supporting luxury, if another order should rank higher in the opinion of the world than their own. Monks of different orders can hardly observe the rules of common politeness, and keep themselves within the bounds of civility when they meet. They eye each other with looks of mortal defiance, and let no opportunity slip of heaping calumny on each other, and of turning into ridicule the manners and customs of each other's order. If the Franciscan should have an image, or relic, in his convent, which is thought an object of greater veneration by the people, than some other relic, or image, of the Dominicans, the latter never loses an opportunity of crying down the worth of the former's property and extolling his own. It is a common saying, "two of a trade can never agree." This proverb is verified by those traders in imposition. The Augustinian hates the Carmelite, the Carmelite the Augustinian, the Augustinian the Dominican and the Franciscan; one branch of the Franciscans hates another branch of the same, the Reformed hating the Capuchin, and the Capuchin the Observant, and in this way they live, hating each other, and trying to debase each other's order, whilst they extol their own, and all for the sake of bringing money into their own coffers, and of making the people imagine that there can be no degree of merit attached to any order, but to that of which they themselves are members. When this opinion once prevails, and gains ground in the minds of the people, then indeed those who were so fortunate as to establish and propagate it, may triumph over the other orders, and may be sure of obtaining that support which follows from the blind devotion of a superstitious peasantry. Many monks are so zealous in contending for the good of their own order, that they make no scruple to compose satires, and even obscene hymns against the



other orders, and distribute copies of them privately among the people; for they imagine, that the more the other orders are lessened in the esteem of the populace, the more will their own grow in that esteem. I have seen a "*prayer*," composed in Latin by a Dominican Friar, in order to turn into ridicule, and bring opprobrium on the Capuchins, who had a convent in the same town, (Albano,) and who ranked higher in the opinion of the public than his own order. It was handed about by the Dominicans, and at last reached the hands of a secular priest, who had a friendship for the Capuchins, and by him it was shown to their superior, who complained against the author to the court of Rome. As far as I can now recollect, for I have not by me a copy of it, it ran thus: "Deus, qui malignos Capuchinos in hoc mundo scaturire fecisti ad destructionem mulierum, olei, vini, panis, cæterorumque tuorum comestibilium, extende super eos, te quesumus, manum tuæ potentiae, da illis morbum Gallicum, et deduc eos in profundum lacum, ubi remaneant per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen."—(O God, who hast made the malignant Capuchins spring up in this world, for the destruction of women, bread, oil, wine, and of thy other eatables; extend over them, we beseech thee, the hand of thy power, give them the \* \* \* disease, and sink them into the deep lake, where may they remain for ever and ever. Amen.) I have deemed it necessary to give this blasphemous prayer—highly blasphemous indeed—in order that the reader may be able to form a judgment of the wicked devices which monks have recourse to when the desire of aggrandizing their own order, and of bringing it into repute, impels them to ridicule, and thereby debase, (though often at the expense of truth, and of doing injury to their fellow creatures,) the orders of other monks. It also may

show the little veneration in which God is held by them, when they dare take in vain His name, and apply it in so unseemly a manner. It is true, that the Capuchins, and indeed all monks, give sufficient provocation to wish them badly; and to endeavour, for the sake of society, to expose their evil doings, but yet, this need not be done in the blasphemous manner which we see here practised; and practised too by those who are as deep in iniquity as the very persons whom they censure.

The well known dispute between the Dominicans and Franciscans relating to the *immaculate conception* of the Virgin Mary, was carried on by these two orders, for many years, with an equal degree of vehemence on both sides. The question, uninteresting as it may appear, and as it really is, "whether the Virgin Mary was born without the blemish of original sin, or not, employed the pens and talents of the greatest men of these orders for many years, and bid fair to disturb the peace, not only of the members of each order, but also of the whole Roman Catholic church. No arguments were left untried, no schemes were left unpractised, by the contending parties, to prove one another guilty of heresy, and thereby to bring on the conquered side the opprobrium attached to the name of heretics. It is not to be supposed that they cared a fig whether the Virgin was, or was not, immaculately born; but the question was started, a different side was taken by each, and the honor of their respective orders, and the maintenance of its respect with the people, required that each party should defend, with all its might, the side of the question it had adopted. The tragic story of Jetzer, conducted at Bern, in 1509, for determining this uninteresting dispute, is well known to the world. I shall, however, take the liberty of relating it here, in order to give the read-

er who may not have heard it before a view of the impious frauds which have been carried on in the church of Rome, and of the little regard which monks pay to the means so that they obtain their end.

The Franciscans maintained that the Virgin Mary was born without the blemish of original sin; the Dominicans asserted the contrary. The doctrine of the Franciscans in an age of darkness and superstition, could not but be popular, and hence the Dominicans lost ground from day to day. To support the credit of their order, they resolved at a chapter held at Vimpson, in the year 1504, to have recourse to fictitious visions and dreams, in which the people at that time had an easy faith, and they determined to make Bern the scene of their operations. A lay-monk named Jetzer, who was extremely simple, and much inclined to austerities, and who belonged to their order, was chosen as the instrument of the delusions they were contriving. One of the four Dominicans, who had undertaken the management of this plot, conveyed himself secretly into Jetzer's cell, and about midnight appeared to him in a horrid figure, surrounded with howling dogs, and seemed to blow fire from his nostrils, by the means of a box of combustibles, which he held near his mouth. In this frightful form, he approached Jetzer's bed, told him, that he was the ghost of a Dominican, who had been killed at Paris, as a judgment of Heaven for laying aside his monastic habit; that he was condemned to purgatory for this crime; adding, at the same time, that by his means, he might be rescued from his misery, which was beyond expression. This story accompanied by horrible cries and howlings frightened poor Jetzer out of the little wits he had, and engaged him to promise to do what was in his power, to deliver the Dominican from his

torments. Upon this, the impostor told him, that nothing but the most extraordinary mortifications, such as *the discipline of the whip*, performed during eight days by the whole monastery, and Jetzer's lying prostrate in the form of one crucified, in the chapel during mass, could contribute to his deliverance. He added, that the performance of these mortifications would draw down upon Jetzer the peculiar protection of the blessed Virgin, and concluded by saying, that he would appear to him again, accompanied by two other spirits. Morning no sooner came than Jetzer gave an account of this apparition to the rest of the convent, who all unanimously advised him to undergo the discipline that was enjoined him, and every one consented to bear his share of the task imposed—that of flogging the poor wretch. The deluded simpleton obeyed, and was admired as a saint by the multitudes, that crowded about the convent, whilst the four friars, that *conducted* the imposture, magnified, in a most pompous manner the miracle of this apparition in their sermons and in their discourses. The night after the apparition was renewed with the addition of two impostors, dressed like devils, and Jetzer's faith was augmented by hearing from the spectre all the secrets of his life and thoughts, which the impostors had learned from his confessor. In this and some subsequent scenes, equal in enormity to those already related, the impostor talked much to Jetzer of the Dominican order, which he said was peculiarly dear to the Blessed Virgin; he added, that the Virgin knew herself to be conceived in original sin; that the doctors who taught the contrary were in purgatory; that the Blessed Virgin abhorred the Franciscans for making her equal with her son; and that the town of Bern would be destroyed for harbouring such plagues within her walls. In one of these apparitions, Jet-

zer imagined that the voice of the spectre resembled that of the prior of the convent, and he was not mistaken; but not suspecting a fraud, he gave little attention to this. The prior appeared in various forms, sometimes in that of St. Barbara; at others in that of St. Bernard: at length he assumed that of the Virgin Mary, and, for that purpose, clothed himself in the habits that were employed to adorn the statue of the Virgin on the great festivals. The little images, that on those days, are set on the altars, were made use of for angels, which, being tied to a cord that passed through a pully over Jetzer's head, rose up and down, and danced around the pretended Virgin, to increase the delusion. The Virgin, thus equipped, addressed a long discourse to Jetzer, in which, among other things, she told him that she was conceived in original sin, though she had remained but a short time under that blemish. She gave him as a miraculous proof of her presence a *host* or consecrated wafer, which turned from white to red in a moment; and after various visits, in which the greatest enormities were transacted, the Virgin prior told Jetzer, that she would give him the most affecting and undoubted marks of her son's love, by imprinting on him the *five wounds*, that pierced Jesus on the cross, as she had done before to St. Lucia and St. Catharine. Accordingly, she took his hand by force, and *struck* a large nail through it, which threw the poor dupe into the greatest torment. The next night, this masculine virgin brought, as she pretended, some of the linen in which Christ had been buried, to soften the wound; and gave Jetzer a soporific draught, which had in it the blood of an unbaptized child, some grains of incense and of consecrated salt, some quicksilver, the hair of the eyebrows of a child, all which, with some stupifying and poisonous ingredients, were mingled together by the prior with magic ceremonies, and a solemn dedica-



tion of himself to the devil in hope of his succour. The draught threw the poor wretch into a sort of lethargy, during which the monks imprinted on his body the other four wounds of Christ in a manner that he felt no pain. When he awakened he found, to his unspeakable joy, those impressions on his body, and came at last to fancy himself a representative of Christ in the various parts of his passion. He was, in this state, exposed to the admiring multitude on the principal altar of the convent, to the great mortification of the Franciscans. The Dominicans gave him some other draughts, that threw him into convulsions. By means of a pipe placed in the mouths of two images, one of Mary, and another of the child Jesus; the former of which had tears painted upon its cheeks in a lively manner, they contrived to make the two images speak. The little Jesus asked its mother, by means of this voice (which was that of the prior) why she wept? and she answered, that her tears were owing to the impious manner in which the Franciscans attributed to her the honour that was due to him, in saying, that she was conceived and born without sin.

The apparitions, false prodigies, and abominable stratagems of these Dominicans were repeated every night; and the matter was at length so grossly overacted, that, simple as Jetzer was, he at last discovered it, and had almost killed the prior, who appeared to him one night in the form of the Virgin with a crown on her head. The Dominicans, fearing, by this discovery, to lose the fruits of their imposture, thought the best method would be to own the whole matter to Jetzer and to engage him, by the most seducing promises of opulence and glory, to carry on the cheat. Jetzer was persuaded, or at least appeared to be so. But the Dominicans, suspecting that he was not entirely gained over, resolved to poison him; but his constitution was so vigorous, that

though they gave him poison five several times, he was not destroyed by it. One day they sent him a loaf prepared with some spices, which growing green in a day or two, he threw a piece of it to some dogs that were in the monastery, and it killed them immediately. At another time, they poisoned the host, or consecrated wafer; but as he vomited it up soon after he had swallowed it, he escaped once more. In short, there were no means of securing him, which the most detestable impiety and barbarity could invent, which they did not put in practice; till finding, at last, an opportunity of getting out of the convent, he threw himself into the hands of the magistrates, to whom he made a full discovery of this infernal plot. The affair being brought to Rome, commissaries were sent from thence to examine the matter; and the whole cheat being fully proved, the four friars were solemnly degraded from their priesthood, and were burnt alive on the last day of May, 1509. Jetzer died some time after, at Constance, having poisoned himself, as was believed by some. Had his life been taken away before he had an opportunity of making the discovery already mentioned, this execrable and horrid plot, which, in many of its circumstances, was conducted with art, would have been handed down to posterity as a stupendous miracle—It is now related by the Franciscans to their novices and students, in order to excite their hatred against the Dominicans, and to be used as an argument in favor of the immaculate conception, which they so zealously defend. They say, “that such a well-laid plot could never be discovered, were it not for the intervention of the Virgin, whose prerogative it attempted to impugn, and thereby lessen the praise and adoration due to her from the faithful; that she permitted it to proceed so far prosperously, in order to take a signal and public ven-

geance on the machinators, and that through her protection Jetzer was preserved from the powerful poisonous draughts, which were so often administered to him by his impious brethren.”\*

The great number of religious orders, that infest society, and the immense number of individuals attached to each order, surpass almost all belief. These orders are distinguished from each other by the colour and form of their respective habits. Some monks wear a white habit; others, a black one; this order is clad in a brown livery, whilst that other, in a gray or parti-coloured one. Some have shoes and stockings, whilst others place merit in going about in sandals, and without stockings. I am not aware, that any order as yet has placed merit in wearing boots; but the time may come, when the pope will put his seal of holiness on boots also! Some orders allow their beards to grow, and shave their heads in imitation of the ancient Magi, whom they much resemble in their impositions; whilst others, on the contrary, shave their beards and let the hair of their head grow. Monks are also divided into three different classes. The first class, is that of *solitaries*, who live alone, and are to be found only among the Calogeri, or Greek monks, especially those inhabiting Mount Athos, in Thessaly, called in modern Greek, “*ορος αγιος*,” or the happy mountain. The Latin church says, that the Trappists, Benedictines, Camaldolensians, &c., are of the class of solitaries; but if they

\* It ought to be understood, that I have followed, with very few variations, the narrative given by Buck, in his “Theological Dictionary,” of the above event. It so exactly accords with the account given by the Franciscans, and with what I have read in other books, that I deemed it needless to make many variations, which, indeed, if made, would consist more in the manner of relating it than in the fact itself.

are, they must be so, as “*lucus a non lucendo*,” for they are to be found in the most populous cities of Europe, and very frequently in the coffee-houses, and other public places, disputing upon politics, or playing cards. This does not look very much like the life of a solitary! The second class is called that of *cœnobites*, or those living in community, as Franciscans, Capuchins, Dominicans, Carmelites, &c. These are the bulwarks of the Romish church, and on them the pope chiefly depends for upholding his assumed authority. The third class is that of *scarbites*, who have no fixed residence, but, after the manner of Mahometan *Santoni*, whom they much resemble, wander through the world, leading a gypsical life, and depending upon their success in imposing on the people, for support. To this class St. Francis belonged, as has been already related, before he acquired tact enough to impose effectually on the people, and afterwards on the pope himself, by which he succeeded in establishing the order, which goes under his name.

At Rome, especially, are to be found monks of all classes and descriptions, and in such numbers, that the stranger will be struck with astonishment, and wonder where, or how, so great an army of idle, sanctified, dronish vagabonds can find support. An English gentleman, residing in that city, wishing to make a probable guess at the number of clergy, with which it is pestered, placed himself in a window looking out upon the Corso—the principal street—and counted the surprising number of one hundred passing by, and strolling about for their diversion, in the space of fifteen minutes. If to this be added the nuns, who would also be strolling about in the street at that time, if they had their own will, that is, if they were not inhumanly buried alive, and shut up within four walls, we may form a to-

lerably just idea of the whole number. Would it be too much to say, that they amount in all to six thousand? I think not, and even hazard to say that they rather exceed than fall short of that number! Six thousand drones depending for support, on a population of one hundred and thirty thousand, for the fixed inhabitants of Rome, do not, absolutely, exceed that number! In winter, certainly, the population is greater; but then, the increase is occasioned by the foreigners, who arrive from other parts of Europe, and who scarcely ever remain longer than three months. If to the six thousand monks, nuns, and secular priests, we add five thousand more for beggars, we will then find, that in the capital of popery, there are eleven thousand useless inhabitants! Eleven thousand mouths, stopped by the sweat of the industrious part of the community! eleven thousand persons whose only office is imposition, robbing and begging, and who fully come up to Horace's description of useless creatures, "*nati consumere fruges,*" "born to waste the fruits of the earth"—to eat every thing up.



## CHAPTER XIX.

Hope of salvation placed in being buried in a Franciscan habit—Story of a soul saved from eternal damnation through the merits of Saint Francis—Emoluments derived by the monks from the popular superstitions—Story of an heir, who was struck dead for defrauding the Franciscans of their due—Ways practised by monks for promoting their own interests—Their tampering with the females of those families, over which they have acquired influence—Story in illustration of the foregoing—Allurements held out to females to enter Nunneries—Monkish treachery illustrated—A young gentleman's own account of the snares laid by monks for himself, and his sisters—One of his sisters dies of a broken heart, on discovering her mistake—Happy termination of the young man's misfortunes.

No small degree of merit is also attached by the benighted followers of popery, to dying and being buried in a religious habit. This proceeds from the sermons of the monks, and from their gossiping among the peasantry and others. Instead of directing sinners to salvation through Christ, and exhorting them to have a firm reliance upon the vicarious atonement made by Him; their favourite theme is, "the interest which their sanctified founder has in heaven, and the respect paid by the D—l to a body dressed up in the habit of the order founded by him—(St. Francis)—though, perhaps the former might justly claim the honour of having suggested it. This respect for their habit is the source of great emolument to them, as many who led a life of debauchery and wickedness, and many too, who led a comparatively virtuous life, leave by their will, a sum of money to that body of monks, on whose masses and prayers they rest their hopes of salva-

tion. The Franciscan habit is held in greater esteem, and consequently is thought to have more power of defending the soul from the claws of his infernal majesty, than any other. It is, therefore, sought after with great eagerness, and that man is thought sure of salvation, who is so fortunate, as to leave this world, covered up in its sacred folds. Many stories are invented by the monks, many fables are brought forward as examples, by which to prove, how acceptable and pleasing to the Supreme Being is this soul-destroying superstition. From an immense number, one, if possible more absurd than the other, I will select a few for the satisfaction of the reader.

An Italian count, who, whilst in health, was the most wicked and depraved of all his associates, being at the point of death, entreated his confessor, a Franciscan monk—to have his body wrapped up after his decease, in the blessed habit of St. Francis, and in that dress, to be committed to the grave. The confessor, after administering the consolations of religion, and after explaining to him the great benefit, which would accrue to his soul from the protection of St. Francis, always partial to those clad in his holy habit, promised to use his influence with the prior of his convent, to obtain the power of complying with his request. This power was speedily granted; chiefly, it may be suspected, because the dying man had left money for the celebration of masses—as auxiliaries in saving his soul—for indeed monks are not so excessively charitable to the souls of others, as to be at any loss, even that of a filthy, worn old habit—(for the longer it is worn by some holy monk, the greater efficacy is attached to it,) without being paid for their trouble and loss, in some way. Having obtained from his superior the desired permission, he returned to the

sick man, and filled his soul with joy and gladness, whilst relating the favourable result of his mission. The poor sinner, placing all his trust and hopes of salvation on the holy habit, peaceably expired soon after. Some days after his decease, he appeared to his confessor, whilst engaged in prayer at midnight in the church, and revealed to him, that "he was on the point of being condemned to the flames of hell, for all eternity, and that the Demon-executioners were in the act of seizing upon his miserable soul, in order to drag it to the place of punishment, when the blessed patriarch St. Francis made his appearance, and observing what was going on, prostrated himself at the throne of justice, and begged, that through *his merits*, and intercession, the soul, whose body was clad in his holy habit, and who had, whilst united to it, befriended his beloved disciples in the other world, may not suffer for all eternity. The Supreme Judge, looking with compassion on the tears of his faithful servant, and unable to resist his entreaties, commuted the sentence to a million of years in purgatory; with the *clause* of being sooner liberated, if a sufficient number of masses be celebrated for the repose of his soul. The holy St. Francis, having thus succeeded in his business of mediator, immediately drove away the D—ls, now become enraged on account of losing their prey, and conducted the half-redeemed soul to purgatory, where he took leave of it, after having first obtained permission from the angel-keeper, to allow it to *ascend* once more into the world above, and relate the whole affair to his confessor, and request of him to speak to his son and heir, and urge him to give a part of his fortune to be laid out on more masses for the repose of his father's soul." Having made this relation, the holy soul redeemed from everlasting tor-

ments by *the habit of St. Francis*, disappeared and returned to its place of temporary punishment.

Will it be thought possible, that such a story as this, such a bare-faced, impious falsehood—could be introduced into a sermon by any Christian minister? To those unacquainted with the extent of monkish impostures, it will, indeed, appear, if not impossible, at least improbable; yet I have both read it in some legend of saints, and heard it afterwards related in the Capuchin church of Frascati, in presence of an assembled multitude. The life of St. Francis formed the subject of the sermon, and the foregoing story was brought forward in proof of that Saint's power, in the court of the Almighty. It is evidently invented for the purpose of increasing and strengthening the popular belief in the sanctity of the Franciscan habit; and of showing forth the great help for obtaining salvation and appeasing the Divine wrath which that habit affords to those, who depart this life clad in its sacred folds. The apparition being made to declare the good effects to the souls in purgatory, proceeding from offering masses in their behalf, and his own expectations from the piety of his son, is but a Jesuitical way of picking the pockets of the hearers, and of exciting them to spend more money on the celebration of masses, for the repose of the souls of their departed friends. It may also be a plan, (if, indeed, the story has any foundation whatever in truth,) for extorting more money from the Count's son, by thus laying open to him the miserable state of his father, and the means of shortening the time of his punishment in purgatory.

There is another story related by the monks, vying with the former in absurdity, though probably invented for the purpose of deterring the heirs of those that bequeath legacies to the order, from with-

holding what the testator thought proper to bestow.

A nobleman of the republic of Genoa, long before it fell under the tyrannical power of his Sardinian majesty, was most devotedly attached to the Franciscan order, and bestowed upon it many substantial marks of his favour during life. At his death he bequeathed a large sum of money, to be used in paying for masses, to be celebrated for the repose of his soul, by the monks of his favourite order. His son, a dissolute young man, refused to comply with the last wishes of his defunct father, and converted to other uses the money designed for the celebration of the masses. After some time, the father appeared to his unworthy son, enveloped in flames of fire, and, with an angry countenance, threatened him with instant death, unless he immediately delivered up to the monks the money which he had bequeathed for their use, telling him, at the same time, that "he was tormented by the most excruciating pains of hell, on account of his avarice and disobedience; for if he, his heir, had complied in fulfilling his last will, and if he had given up to the possession of those for whom it was intended, that part of his fortune he had willed to them, the suffrages and prayers of the monks would be of the greatest avail in redeeming his soul from the tormenting state in which it was now placed." He further added, "that the habit of St. Francis, in which he was buried, was of no avail whatever, because his son had not given to the holy fraternity, to which it belonged, what was lawfully their due, and that St. Francis, far from looking upon him with a favourable and protecting eye, only regarded him with anger, and had his body stripped of the holy habit, immediately after it was consigned to the tomb." The spectre-father then disappeared, and left his son



in the deepest consternation, and fully resolved to make amends for his evil and unjust conduct. But this resolution was but momentary, and again he engaged in evil courses with his wicked companions, to whom he related the occurrence, and who laughed him out of his fright, whilst squandering the property to which he became heir. One night, after returning from a carousal, in which he spent the greater part of the day with his vicious companions, he retired to his chamber in a state of intoxication. The following morning, on his servant's entering his room to assist him as he was wont to do, in dressing, he found him stretched at full length on the floor, a lifeless corpse. It was supposed that his father appeared to him again, and, angry at his continuing to withhold the money from the Franciscans, and thereby depriving him of the benefit of their prayers and masses—the only means of relieving him from torment—he had struck him dead, in order to make him serve as a future example to undutiful heirs, and of the sure punishment awaiting such, even in this world. This supposition was confirmed afterwards, when on opening the father's grave for the purpose of depositing at his side the body of the son, the former's corpse was found stark-naked. This being seen by one of the son's companions, who attended the funeral, it immediately brought to his recollection the story related to him by the son, some time before his death, and more especially that part of it connected with the father's declaring that "his body was despoiled of the habit, in which he was buried, by order of St. Francis." He confessed the whole affair publicly, and in presence of all those attending the funeral, and becoming convinced of the dangerous state in which he was placed by his evil course of life, he retired from the world altogether, and dedicated himself to God, under the banner of St. Francis.

The young man dying without issue, the property was applied for the redemption of the souls of its former owners from the torments which they were, most probably, suffering; the part bequeathed by the father's will, being first given up to the Franciscans, according to the primitive intention of the testator, and the rest divided among the other regular and secular clergy of the city, as a compensation for their prayers and masses. Nor did the miracle stop here. The Lord wished publicly to show to his faithful people how much He was pleased with the forementioned distribution of the property. A holy hermit was directed to go to the bishop of Genoa, and signify that it was the Lord's wish, that the graves of the father and son should be again opened. The bishop obeyed the Lord's message, and accompanied by the clergy and laity of the city, in procession, proceeded to open the graves. The body of the father was found incorrupt, covered with a sweet-scented liquor, and again clad in the habit of St. Francis, by the same invisible agency it had been before stripped of it; whilst that of the son was found putrid, and fast dwindling into dissolution. The former's body was removed and deposited under the altar of the Franciscan church at Genoa, where it is kept to this day, as a lasting memorial of the power of St. Francis, and of the good effects following from being buried in his habit, and from the prayers and suffrages of his holy disciples (especially when they are paid for them, some heretic will add!) and of the terrible punishment awaiting those that dare defraud them of any part of that which the Almighty inspired the minds of departing sinners to bequeath them.

The above story is its own comment. I shall not add a single word to the bare narrative, but leave the reader to make his own reflections upon it; only remarking, that it is by such means that monasteries

acquire their riches. If, however, a church that gives countenance to such absurdities be infallible, thank God, there are few infallible churches in the world.

Besides the fables and stories invented for the purpose of increasing the popular veneration for those things to which they attribute miraculous power, and which fables they are not ashamed to relate publicly in their pulpit, thus converting the temple of God into a place for promoting their own worldly views, they have also other ways, by which they arrive at the same end—ways, indeed, more slow than the former, but yet more sure. The old monks, especially, are appointed to the exercise of them, as being supposed to have arrived at *perfection* by long practice in the arts of monkery. These ways chiefly consist in wheedling themselves into the bosom of families, and having acquired a degree of footing in them, and become master of their secrets, either through the organ of confession, or by the incautious relations of the heads of the families themselves, and not unfrequently, by that of tattling servants, they take their own measures, and convert every circumstance to further the end, never lost sight of—the advantage of themselves and of their order.

The females belonging to such families are more especially those upon whose weak and uneducated minds—nearly all Italian women are miserably uneducated—they make the greatest impression. To these they relate the wonders and miracles performed by their order, and by its founder; the power granted from Heaven to all those clad in their habit; the very great benefits, temporal as well as spiritual, accruing to believers from the prayers and suffrages of the monks; and the exceedingly great happiness of having St. Francis, and his beatified followers interceding for departed souls at the throne

of the Almighty. If these females be mothers of families, they will endeavour to instil into the minds of their children the same notions of monkish sanctity with which their own minds are imbued, and thus the monks find the rising generation as willing to be duped, and to be subservient to their impositions, as their fathers and mothers were before them. If the family with which a monk has succeeded to ingratiate himself, be in opulent circumstances—and monks seldom bait their hooks for any others—then the merit to be obtained by giving money for the celebration of masses, or for buying clothes for the decoration of the image of the Madonna, or for singing an office for the repose of the soul of some departed relative or friend; the merit to be obtained by things of this description is laid open by him in a most forcible light, and seldom fails of bringing money into the coffers of the convent. If the wife should have any cause, either real or imaginary, to complain of her husband, or the husband of his wife, to whom else could either of them reveal, with more propriety, the domestic brawl than to the man of God?—as the favoured monk is styled. And does the man of God endeavour to restore peace and mutual confidence again to this divided family? If it answer his ends, that is, if it be for the good of himself and of his order, he endeavours to do so; for if both husband and wife be equally blind and attached to the order, he finds it more his interest to have them reconciled than at variance. But if, on the contrary, one should be inimical to the order, and the other friendly to it, he is very sure, and it is a part of his tact, to endeavour to widen the breach; for he can gain more by their dissension than by their harmony. The wife is the one on whom he more especially depends for the success of his designs, as the husband, in most cases,

barely tolerates his visits, and would wish to see both him and his convent, (which, perhaps, at the coffee-house, among his companions, he calls by its right name—a den for knaves—) at the bottom of the sea. The monk is not so stupid as not to perceive the dislike in which the husband holds him and his order, and if it be ever in his power, he does not forget it towards him. He, however, has the wife still to work upon; and she, on her part, finds him a ready listener whilst she relates the faults and failing of her husband. Instances are not wanting of whole families turned topsy-turvy through the meddling of monks in their private concerns; for, instead of being blessed peace-makers, the effects following their mediations prove them to be accursed sowers of dissensions. Wives at variance with their husbands have been frequently found to have made away with the substance and properties of the same, and to have bestowed them upon their advisers, the monks; and all this, by the encouragement and exhortation of the monks themselves.

In illustration of the evil effects which usually attend the meddling of friars in family concerns, and of the wicked use which they make of the influence gained over the minds of the female members of such families, I shall mention a circumstance related to me by a gentleman whom I met at Corfu.

There lived in the town of Macerata situated in the March of Ancona, and about fifty miles from the city of Ancona itself, a newly married couple, of the name of Riezzi; well to do in the world, Riezzi himself being a public notary of some estimation in the town. His wife was foolishly attached to a convent of Franciscan monks, who had chosen that city as a place for carrying on their impostures, and who realized considerable incomes, from the superstition of the people. Her more particular favourite



was her confessor, the superior of the forementioned convent, and with him she spent more time, than in the company of her husband. The latter on the other hand, could barely tolerate the visits and intrusions of the monks, into his house, and privately told his wife, that he would be better pleased, if she made less freedom with them. This was the cause of a contention between them, which afterwards broke out into an open rupture. The wife complained to her confessor, that she was badly treated by her husband, chiefly on account of her endeavouring to work out her salvation by adhering to the advice, and practising the directions laid down by him, in his capacity of minister of Christ. She then enumerated many of the bad qualities of her husband, and among others, did not forget to mention the command received from him of breaking off her acquaintance with himself, and with those of his order. The hatred which the husband had for those of his convent, and consequently for himself, had not escaped the observation of the perfidious confessor, and he therefore lent a willing ear to this confirmation of what he had already observed. By his advice, his penitent, the wife, continued in her usual routine of confessions, communions, fasting &c., and in giving whatever she could pilfer privately from her husband to the community of which he himself was head. The friars now abstained from their accustomed visits to his house, but to be revenged for his casting them off, they took every opportunity which presented, of speaking badly of him in their visits to other houses, and of representing him as a man of no religion, and as one infected with the principles of free-masonry, which at that time, as well as now, were fast spreading through the Roman States. The poor man, by reason of such insinuations and such reports, found himself

by degrees, losing his extensive practice, and looked upon with suspicion by his fellow-townsmen; besides being under the close *surveillance* of the police. He suspected, that his wife had a hand in raising this storm, through the agency of the monks to whom she had complained against him. He accused her of it, and she, far from denying having had part in it, even gloried in her own shame, and plainly told him, that the duty she owed to God was of greater importance, than that she owed to her husband, and therefore her duty to God had prompted her to resist his attempts at withdrawing from her the advice and directions of God's ministers. On this, words rose high between them, and from words, the husband proceeded to violence, and gave her a blow, which stretched her lifeless on the floor. Fearing he had killed her, he thought it best to consult for his own safety, by a hasty flight, and thus make his escape from the hands of justice. He immediately fled from his house, taking with him, whatever, at that moment, he could lay hands upon, but knowing how difficult it would be to elude the searches of those, who would be sent in pursuit of him, he deemed it expedient to unite himself with the insurgent army, who were about that time, to march from Bologna towards Rome, in order to take possession of the latter city, and free their country from papal bondage.

At Civita Castellano, he distinguished himself by his bravery, and perseverance in attacking that fortress, which impeded the further progress of the brave and talented insurgents.\* The expedition

\* The insurrection, which in the year 1831, broke out in the Roman States, was planned and perfected wholly in Bologna. The chief leaders of it were medical and legal students in that city. Indeed all, who were tired, and wearied out with monks, priests,

entirely failing, and being forced to retire on the approach of the Austrians, who were sent for by the pope to help him to tyrannize over his unfortunate subjects, he, with many others fled towards the sea-coast, and seizing upon a fishing smack that was drawn up on the beach, put to sea and steered for Corfu which island they reached after a passage of ten days, during which they suffered great privations, not having had time to provide themselves with sufficient provisions; and they would certainly have died of starvation, had they not fortunately fallen in with a Maltese vessel, which took them aboard and landed them safely in their place of destination. At Corfu, I became acquainted with Signor Riezzi, and from his own mouth, I learned the circumstance, which I have now related. He further informed me, that his wife recovered soon after his departure, and following the advice of the monks, laid information against him before the prefect of the police, who immediately dispatched his myrmidons in pursuit. His property was afterward confiscated, and she turned into the streets, without the means of subsistence—a punishment she well merited for her perfidious and unbecoming conduct.

If a monk obtain footing in a rich family, where there are young women, daughters, his first care will be to endeavour to weaken their affections for

and friars: all, who had sense enough to see into the impositions practised in order to uphold the papal power; even many of the secular and regular clergy, who esteemed the common good of greater importance than their own individual interest, were all and every one of them united in the common cause and bound themselves by a sacred oath, to use all the means in their power to free their country even at the hazard of their own lives and fortunes. They richly deserve then the epithet of "*brave and talented insurgents.*"

their parents and kindred; and to fix them upon something, by which he and his order might be benefitted. He opens his attack upon the daughters of his host by a long detail of the happiness to be found in the monastic state, and the very high privileges enjoyed by those, who are so fortunate as to become *the spouses* of Jesus Christ—the blasphemous title, which they give to nuns.\* This is his favorite topic, especially when some of the young women are present, though he does not direct his discourse immediately to them; for the better to succeed in his purpose, which is manifestly that of enticing them into a convent, he appears not even to be conscious of their presence. He therefore addresses wholly his discourse to the mother, or to some other *turtuffish* old woman, who may be present. He knows well enough, that his discourse will not be thrown away, for either it will have the desired effect immediately on the minds of those, for whom it is intended; or will be repeated, after his departure, by the mother or aunt or by some other woman, who was listening to it, and thus at length will be deeply fixed on the minds of the young women. If he be the confessor of young women of

\* It is a remarkable coincidence, that to nearly all the Hindoo temples are attached numbers of females, who are openly prostituted to the base desires of the priests, and of those, who frequent the temples. These women, like the nuns of the Romish church, are said to be spouse of the god. Query—Are not both employed for the same purpose—the gratification of the desires of their infamous priests? The more popery is examined, the more striking will her relationship to all the false religions, ancient and modern, appear. Her peculiarities and practices, are evidently the same with those of paganism, and the doctrines of both lead to the same end, and have the same object in view—the destruction of souls, and the private advantage of their ministers.

this description, he will then have a favorable opportunity of working upon their minds, and of entrapping them into a compliance with his wishes. Whilst seated in the confessional, with his victims on their knees before him, he can very easily, under the form of advice and instruction, lay open to them the difficulty of saving their souls in the married state; the dangers and temptations of the world, the troubles and hardships, which they will have to endure for their husbands and children, and—in fine, he can represent every thing in the worst light, which the young women, if left to their own unprejudiced judgment, would consider as the necessary attendants on the lot of human nature. On the other hand, he paints in most enticing colors, the peace and calm, to be found in the state of a nun; the facilities held forth by that state for holding a closer communion with God; the protection and intercession of the deceased holy nuns, who walked before them in the same road to salvation; the harmony and sisterly love, which reign among the holy virgins dedicated to God, and the honor of becoming a spouse of Jesus Christ; all and every one of these will be painted by him in the most glowing colors, and insensibly make an impression on the minds of his unsuspecting victims, till at last they consent to become self-murderers, and to bury themselves alive in the convent of some sisterhood, of which their confessor, or the monks of his order have the government. After the fatal step, they soon become aware of the deception practised upon them by their wily confessor, and clearly see, in a short time that their fortunes and not their persons were longed for by the nuns of the convent, into which they were so unfortunate as to enter. Their life will become miserable and they will spend it in cur-

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sing their unhappy fate, and in cursing the perfidy of the villain—for so they will call him—who taking advantage of their inexperience and simplicity, led them by his advice and counsels, in order to advance his own private interests, to sacrifice themselves at the shrine of a monstrous and unnatural superstition. Every thing will be found quite contrary to what they were led to expect, and from what it was represented to them; they will find neither peace, happiness nor religion, and instead of experiencing the sweet calm and contentment of those, who have placed their affections on the things, which this world cannot bestow, they will experience *the torment of desires*, which they are obliged to repress, or, at least conceal, of disappointment, and of despair. Let it not be supposed, that this picture of a nun's life is too highly coloured; and that the description I have given of it surpasses, in any way, the truth. Let those that imagine so, only examine for themselves, and without trusting to the opinion of others, let them take a view of human nature, as it exists, under their own actual observation, and if they continue in opposing the truth of the above picture, then indeed their eyes must have lost their natural force, and become incapable of performing what they were designed for—to help the judgment in forming just notions of things.

It is not to be supposed, that monks go to this trouble of inveigling young women into nunneries, thereby bringing down upon themselves the curses of those, upon whom they succeed, without having some other object in view, besides the gratuitous pleasure of rendering others miserable. Although they derive no little pleasure, even from this fiendish indulgence, they yet have a more substantial object also in view—even that of obtaining a part of the young woman's fortune, which she takes with her

to the nunnery, and gives up to the disposal of her future sisters. The monks, like recruiting sergeants, who get so much a head for the men, whom they bring to join the military service, have also their head-money for every young lady of fortune, that they entrap into a nunnery. They are also the governors of the nunneries, and all money matters, and affairs relating to its interests are transacted by them. The richer, then, the nunnery is, the more opportunities will they have of pilfering it, and of converting the surplus revenues to their own private use, or to that of the convent, to which they belong. The desire of enriching themselves, seems to be the main spring of their treachery; and all the delusive arts, which they practise for the purpose of working upon the minds of the simple and confiding, seem directed to the accomplishment of that great end.

A young gentleman, whose sister was inveigled into a convent by the persuasions and manœuvres of a monk, her confessor, and who was obliged to flee from Italy, himself, on account of joining the Bolognese insurgents, related to me at Corfu, his place of refuge, and *mine also indeed*, the following story. It will illustrate, and give an example of the manner in which monks act, in order to draw young women of property under their control. I shall relate it in his own words.

“My father was a goldsmith in Senegaglia, and acquired a handsome independence by his industry and success in trade. I had two sisters, one older and the other younger than myself. My older sister was married, whilst yet very young, to one of her own equals, my father being able to give her a considerable dowry. She also, before her marriage, was besieged by the arts and stratagems of the monks, who endeavoured to persuade her to become a nun, but being naturally

of a strong mind, she was able to see into their designs, and to evade the snares that were laid for her happiness. I should have told you, that my father was very intimate with monks of the Dominican order, who had a convent in our town. These were frequent visitors at his house and table, and seemed to have acquired a considerable influence over him. His table, his money, his interest, every thing he had, was at their service, whilst they, on their part, wished to repay his kindness, by marking out his three children for their victims. The marriage of my elder sister did not in the least discourage them in their attempts, though her fortune was considered a serious loss; for they congratulated themselves on the fair field they had for enticing her into a convent, and thereby gaining possession of it. They now exerted themselves with renewed vigour in working on the minds of the remaining two, myself and my younger sister. As for me, they were almost sure, I showed such a docile, flexible disposition, that I could be easily prevailed upon to embrace their order, and enrich the convent with the property, which my father, at his death, would bequeath me. Nor did they give up their hopes of my coming to that determination, when I was removed to Bologna, by my father's orders, to prepare myself for the medical profession. They followed me there by letters, and gave notice to their fellow-Dominicans in Bologna, that I was game worth chasing, and that they should endeavour to ingratiate themselves into my favor; as the property, which I was heir to, would be of great advantage to the whole Dominican order.

“ I was hardly well set down at Bologna, when I found my acquaintance eagerly sought after by the monks. I was pressed to accept of invitations to dinners, festivals, and other things of this kind, almost every day by them, and when I did accept

them, I was treated with the greatest respect, placed at the head of the table, and flattered in the most fulsome manner. They never ceased speaking before me of the happiness to be enjoyed in the monastic life, and how far superior that life is to a secular, and how much better to enjoy the sweet calm and tranquillity of a monastery, than be tossed about and harassed by the turmoils of the world. They certainly were making strong impressions on my mind, and would have succeeded in bringing me over to their wishes, had not a conversation, which I accidentally overheard between the prior and another friar, opened my eyes to their designs. Visiting the convent one evening, when I was not expected, I heard my own name frequently repeated by two, who seemed deeply engaged in conversation. Curiosity prompted me to listen more attentively, when I discovered that their conversation was about myself, and that the final attack in persuading me should be made in a few days. I could also discover, from their conversation, that my sister had consented to become a Dominican nun, and that my father had already given his consent. I retired from the convent without being seen by any one, and immediately wrote a letter to my father, acquainting him with what I had overheard, and entreating him to retract the consent, he had given, of having my unfortunate sister buried alive. I afterwards learned, that my sister, after my departure, being left alone, and having no one to direct her, gave herself up wholly to the guidance of the monks, and they at last succeeded in prevailing upon her to enter a nunnery. She remained firm in her intention, and having received her portion from my father, she settled it on the convent, and took the veil. After her solemn profession, she became more fully acquainted with mo-



nachism, which soon brought on grief and disappointment. These soon preyed on her spirits and produced a slow decline of which she soon after died, cursing with her latest breath the perfidy of the villains, who had worked on her weak mind, in order to get possession of her fortune, by enticing her into a convent. I became after this so disgusted, so enraged against the monks, that I refused having any more connection with them, and even refused them admittance to my lodgings, when they came for the purpose of seeing me. They, on the other hand, finding that they had lost their influence over me, wrote many letters to my father, wherein they were not ashamed to give utterance to many falsehoods relating to my conduct at the university, by which they hoped to prejudice my father against me. My father himself, after a short time becoming conscious of the scheme which was laid for entrapping his fortune and his children, took no notice of their calumnies, and even advised me, not to have any thing to do with them and not to pay any attention either to their advice or themselves. I believe, he repented of being so easily duped in my sister's case, and forbade his former friends, the Dominicans, his house after my sister's death. I myself joined the insurgents at Bologna, and now, through the miscarriage of our glorious expedition, am, like yourself, (meaning me) indebted to a foreign land for protection. My father is still living and remits me money, when he can do it, without running the risk of being discovered. I myself am outlawed, but my father assures me, that he will come and settle in Corfu, as soon as he can dispose of his property."

Here my friend finished his narrative. I have given it, to the best of my recollection, in his own words, and I consider it a striking example of the perfidy and chicanery of monks in their attempts to enrich



themselves at the expense of the happiness of others, whether males, or females. The reader will be pleased to learn, that the father of the above soon after arrived in Corfu, having disposed of his property in Senegaglia, and lives there now contented in the society of his son.

## CHAPTER XX.

Adoration and prayers to Saints—Confirmed by the Council of Trent—Absurdity of that Doctrine—Image-worship—Papists really and truly idolaters—How they excuse themselves—Adoration of the statue of Saint Januarius at Naples—Blasphemous prayer addressed to Jesus Christ by the Neapolitans—Idol-worship practised by all false Religions—Modern Greeks and Romans inexcusable—History of the rise and progress of image-worship in the church of Christ—Image-worship abhorred by the Primitive church—Opinions of some of the early Fathers on that subject—Images of Saints admitted as ornaments in the Churches in the beginning of the fifth Century—Gregory the Great condemns image-worship—The monks of the eighth century establish image-worship by their own example—Edict of Leo, the Isaurian, concerning images—The Priests and Monks excite the people to rebellion, in consequence of it—Leo orders all images to be publicly burnt—Image-worship favoured by Popes—Iconoclastæ, and Iconolatræ—Charlemagne declares against image-worship—Claudius, bishop of Turin, orders all images to be cast out of the Churches—Image-worship established by law in the eastern and western Churches, and triumphs, till the era of the Reformation—Effects of the reformation on image-worship.

THE invocation of saints; that is, the adoration of, and prayers to, the saints, is a favourite doctrine of the church of Rome. The council of Trent expressly teaches; “that the saints reigning with Christ

in Heaven, offer up and present prayers to God for men, and that those, who pray to the saints for their intercession, may expect to have their prayers to God heard *with* more attention. Though these are not the precise words of the council on the article of *invocation of saints*, yet, it is manifest, that such is the meaning of them, and that a belief in the help afforded by saints to their fellow sinners in obtaining salvation, is intended to be established by them. This doctrine is so contrary to Scripture, and to common sense, that no one, who has for a moment examined it, can think seriously of setting it down as an article of the Christian faith; nay, he will immediately perceive, that it is one of those monstrous, absurd doctrines, with which the Romish church has darkened the clear atmosphere of genuine Christianity. The Scriptural arguments by which it is proved heretical and erroneous, are numerous and unanswerable; but as bringing them forward in this work, might be deemed unnecessary, and superfluous, I shall on that account, omit them. It is a doctrine also, directly contrary to common sense; for it supposes the omnipresence of finite and limited beings, and their being able to hear and attend to, at one and the same time, prayers offered up to them in different parts of the world—in China and Ireland, Rome and Madrid. This being the attribute of God alone, it cannot then be applied to one of his creatures without derogating from His honour, and robbing Him of one of his attributes. If it be denied, that such a supposition is made; how then, it may be asked, can the saints hear the requests, and prayers offered up to them, if they be not near? If they have not the power of hearing such prayers; how then can they attend to them, and intercede with God in favour of the petitioners. It is clear therefore, that addressing prayers and petitions to

such powerless gods—for gods they really are made—is inconsistent with common sense, and unworthy of a judicious mind.

From this erroneous doctrine of the invocation of saints, flow the adoration and worship paid to images, pictures and relics. This adoration, however it may be excused and got over by the advocates of popery, is certainly in itself *positive Idolatry*. Idolatry is the act of ascribing to things and persons properties which are peculiar to God alone. When the papist ascribes to a certain image, or to a certain picture situated in a certain part of the world, the power of healing the sick, of granting miraculous favours, of protecting from pestilence, shipwrecks, &c., does he not ascribe to inanimate, dead, and senseless things properties peculiar to God alone? Is he not then acting the idolater? When he bows down to, and worships such an image, or such a picture, for the sake of propitiating it in his favour; is he not then acting idolatrously? And granting, that he adores, worships, and prays to—not the stone or canvass, of which the idol or picture is composed—though ninety-nine out of a hundred saint-worshippers really imagine, that the idol itself has the power of granting him his petitions, and adores it with the greatest sincerity accordingly, for if such an idea did not exist, why would there be a distinction made between the image of a saint, situated in one place, and that in another?—even granting that he prays to and adores the person represented by such a picture or image; is he on that account free from the crime of idolatry? I should think not; whereas he gives that adoration to a creature, which is due to God alone, and attributes to the same creature a power, which, if he really possessed it, he would be no longer a creature. Nor will it lessen the objection to say, that the creature prayed to, is now a

sanctified person and enjoying the favour of God, and therefore, that prayers are offered to him for the purpose of imploring his intercession at the throne of the Almighty. This excuse, even if it were true, which it is not, as all will confess, who have fully examined the subject, would be of no avail, for it would still remain to be accounted for, upon what authority *another mediator between God and man, besides the man Christ Jesus*, was set up, contrary to the express words of Scripture. Besides, in soliciting the mediation of that creature, the creature itself is adored and worshipped; but he who worships or adores a creature is an idolater; *ergo*, it is certain, that all saint-adorers, and saint-worshippers are idolaters. But so far from the devotees of saints praying for their intercession, and protection, they, for the most part, are confident, that the saints themselves have the immediate power of granting them their request, and therefore, pray to them accordingly, without even once thinking of God, or that He alone has the power of satisfying them. This is fully proved by the practices of the people in those countries, where saint-worship and idolatry is established by law, under the name of Christianity. Their curses, and even their blessings are always invoked in the name of some saint. “*Che vi venga la maledizione di San Francesco;*” or “*la Madonna vi ajuti.*”—(The curse of St. Francis on you: may the Virgin Mary be your guide)—are frequent forms of prayer or malediction, in the mouth of every Italian. In Naples, as remarkable for the shrine of St. Januarius, as for the Volcano of Vesuvius, whose eruptions are kept in order—so the people believe, and so the priests of his temple preach—by his blood contained in a vial, it is no uncommon thing to hear the following blasphemous prayer: “*O Gesu Christo, prega, ti preghiamo, a san Gennaro a*

far un miracolo;" or, "pregalo a concederci questo favore:" (O Jesus Christ, we pray Thee to pray St. Januarius to perform a miracle, or pray him to grant us this favour, &c.) Thus St. Januarius is placed above Jesus Christ, and the latter is only prayed to for his intercession with the former to perform a miracle, or to grant favours!! This is the common people's belief; and even if such preposterous language be rejected and condemned by the more enlightened, it nevertheless shows the tendency which saint-worship, and images have to make the greater part of the people, really and truly idolaters. Its being so glaringly blasphemous, is the reason why it is rejected, at least in part, by the enlightened part of the citizens; but I am much mistaken, if they do not worship and adore the golden image of their saint,\* though in another way, and in different words, with more confidence and devotion, than they approach in prayer the Lord and Giver of life; so that these also, justly come under the hateful, anti-christian name of "Idolaters."

It is remarkable that all false religions have the worship of images, more or less, embodied among their other erroneous notions of the adoration due to the Supreme Being. The early history of all ages, and of all people, fully proves the truth of this observation. From the unpolished and uncivilized

\* The image of St. Januarius, as it stands in the cathedral church of Naples, is of solid silver, washed over with gold. The head and face are wholly of the latter metal. The Neapolitan Lazaroni, when they pray before this image, address it with the greatest freedom, and ask its aid in being able to escape detection from some crime, which they propose committing. They generally call this saint by the familiar title of "*faccia gialliccia*" or yellow face, (his face being of gold,) and promise him so many wax candles, if they succeed in their undertaking. If they do not, they threaten to pull his beard, which, by the way, is also of gold.



South Sea savages, to the cultivated and polite Greeks and Romans, not less the fathers of the arts and sciences than the Chaldeans, Phœnicians, and Egyptians themselves; for the former improved and perfected what the latter handed down to them; all and every one of these nations went after and adored gods made with their own hands; idolatry being a religion more adapted to the bent which men have towards visible and sensible objects. Men want gods who shall go before them, and be amongst them, because God, who is every where in power, and no where in appearance, is hard to be conceived without the light of divine illumination. However excusable, then, these may be in their erroneous notions of the worship suited to a spiritual and unseen God, because not favoured with that light, the modern Romans have only the excuse, that they are led by their priests to imitate their pagan ancestors in their love of idols, and who corrupt the word of God, impiously corrupt it, in order to make it speak in favour of their idolatry, or, when this is impossible, to make it, at least, pass over in silence that abominable crime. For this reason many texts of scripture are tortured into a sense quite different from their real significations, while others are either left out entirely, or mutilated, as has been done with the second commandment—whereby we are commanded neither to make nor bow down to a graven image, or to the likeness of any creature. And here it may not be deemed foreign to our subject to give a succinct account of the rise and progress of image-worship in the church of Christ. I do it the more willingly, as it will give the reader an idea of the horror, and detestation, in which idolatry was held by the primitive church, and of the opposition it met with, and the bloodshed it caused, before it was

finally established, and engrafted on the pure stock of genuine Christianity.

It is plain from the practice of the primitive church, recorded by the earlier fathers, that Christians, during the first three centuries, and the greater part of the fourth, neither worshipped images, nor used them in their worship. However, the generality of popish divines maintain that the use and worship of images are as ancient as the Christian religion itself. To prove this, they bring forward a decree, said to have been made in a council held by the apostles at Antioch, commanding the faithful, that they may not err about the object of their worship, to make images of Christ and worship them. This decree is mentioned by Cardinal Baronius in his *Ecclesiastical Annals*, under the year of our Lord 102; but it is strange that no notice is taken of it till seven hundred years after the apostolic times, after the dispute about images had commenced. The first instance that occurs, in any credible author, of images among Christians, is that recorded by Tertullian, (*De Pudicitia*, cap. 10,) of certain cups, or chalices, on which was represented the parable of the good shepherd carrying the lost sheep on his shoulders: but this instance only proves that the church, at that time, did not think emblematical figures unlawful ornaments of chalices. Another instance is taken from Eusebius, (*Ecclesiastical History*, lib. vii. cap. 18,) who says, that in his time, (he lived in the beginning of the fourth century,) there were to be seen two brass statues in the city of Paneas, or Cæsarea Philippi, the one of a woman on her knees, with her arm stretched out, the other of a man over against her, with his hand extended to receive her. These statues were said to be the images of our Saviour, and the woman whom he cured of an issue of blood. From the foot of the

statue representing our Saviour, he relates that there sprung up an exotic plant, which, as soon as it grew to the height of touching the border of his garment, was said to cure all sorts of distempers. The historian, however, vouches none of these things; nay, he supposes, that the woman who erected this statue of our Saviour was a pagan, *and ascribes it to a pagan custom*. This supposition is very reasonable, for it is very probable that the woman who erected it, was herself afflicted with an issue of blood and, hearing from some Christians, perhaps, that the God whom they worshipped, formerly cured a woman afflicted with it, she also, hoping the same effect, and imitating the customs of paganism, erected this statue to conciliate the favour of the Christians' God. It is highly improbable then, that the Christians would adore an image set up by the superstition of a pagan woman, for though that image may even represent the God of their own worship, yet it was always brass, or some other matter, which they abhorred to worship. The primitive Christians abstained from the worship of images, not, as the Papists pretend, from tenderness to heathen idolaters, but because they thought it unlawful in itself to make any image of the Deity. Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Origen, were of opinion, that, by the second commandment, painting and engraving were unlawful to a Christian, styling them evil and wicked arts. (Tert. De Idolatria, cap. 3. Clem. Alex. Admonitiones ad Gentes, p. 41. Origen contra Celsum. lib. vi. p. 182.)

The uses of images in churches, as ornaments, were first introduced by some Christians in Spain, in the beginning of the fourth century; but the practice was *condemned as a dangerous innovation*, in a council held at Eliberis, in 305. The custom of admitting pictures of saints and martyrs into

churches, (for this was the first source of image-worship,) was rare in the end of the fourth century, but became common in the fifth. But they were still considered only as ornaments, and even in this view, as shall be shown in the sequel, they met with very considerable opposition. In the following century the custom of thus adorning churches became almost universal, both in the east and west. Petavius expressly says, (*De Incarnatione*, lib. xv. cap. 14,) that no statues were yet allowed in the churches, because they bore too near a resemblance to the idols of the Gentiles. Towards the close of the fourth, or beginning of the fifth century, images, which were introduced by way of ornament, and then used as an aid to devotion, began to be actually worshipped. However, it continued to be the doctrine of the church in the sixth, and in the beginning of the seventh centuries, that images were to be used only as helps to devotion, and not as objects of worship. The worship of them was condemned, in the strongest terms, by Gregory the Great, as appears by two of his letters written in 601. From this time to the beginning of the eighth century, there occurs no instance of any worship given, or allowed to be given, to images, by any council or assembly of bishops whatever. But they were commonly worshipped by the monks, and populace, in the beginning of the eighth century; insomuch that, in 726, when Leo, the Isaurian, published his famous edict, image-worship had already spread into all the provinces subject to the empire.

Leo's edict was occasioned by the disturbances which broke out in his reign about the worship of images. By it he abrogated, according to some, the worship of images altogether, and ordered all the images, except that of Christ's crucifixion, to be removed from the churches; but, according to others,

this edict only prohibited the paying to them any kind of adoration or worship. The tumults excited by the contending parties in favour and against image-worship, was the cause of the revolution which deprived Leo's predecessor, Bardanes, of the imperial throne in 713. The edict published by Leo himself, in 726, which we have mentioned before, occasioned also a civil war, which broke out in the islands of the Archipelago, and by the suggestions of the priests and monks, ravaged a great part of Asia, and afterwards reached Italy. The civil commotions and insurrections in Italy were chiefly promoted by the Roman pontiffs, Gregory I, and II. Leo was excommunicated; and his subjects, in the Italian provinces, violated their allegiance, and rising in arms, either massacred or banished all the emperor's deputies and officers. In consequence of these proceedings, Leo assembled a council at Constantinople, in 730, which degraded Germanus, bishop of that city, who was a patron of images; and he ordered all the images to be publicly burnt, and inflicted a variety of punishments upon such as were attached to that idolatrous worship. Hence arose two factions, one of which adopted the adoration and worship of images, and on that account were called *iconolatæ*, or image-adorers, (from *εικων*, an image, and *λατρευσιν*, to adore;) and the other maintained that such worship was unlawful, and that nothing was more worthy of the zeal of Christians than to demolish and destroy those statues and pictures which were the occasion of this gross idolatry, and hence they were distinguished by the title of *iconoclastæ*, or image-breakers, (from *εικων*, an image, and *κλαστειν*, to break.) The zeal of Gregory II, in favour of image-worship, was not only imitated, but even surpassed by his successor, Gregory III, in consequence of



which the Italian provinces were torn from the Grecian empire. Constantine, called Copronymus, in 764, convened a council at Constantinople, regarded by the Greeks as the seventh oecumenical council, which solemnly condemned the worship and usage of images. Those who, notwithstanding the decree of the council, raised commotions in the state, were severely punished, and new laws were enacted to set bounds to the violence of monastic rage. Leo IV, who was proclaimed emperor in 755, pursued the same measures, and had recourse to the coercive influence of penal laws, in order to extirpate idolatry out of the Christian church. Irene, the wife of Leo, having poisoned her husband in 780, assumed the reins of empire during the minority of her son Constantine; and in 786, summoned a council at Nice, in Bithynia, known by the name of the *second Nicene council*, which abrogated the laws and decrees passed by former emperors against the new idolatry, restored the worship of images, and of the cross, and denounced severe punishments against those who maintained that God was the only object of religious adoration.

In this contest the Britons, Germans, and Gauls were of opinion that images might be lawfully continued in the churches; but they considered the worship of them as highly injurious and offensive to the Supreme Being. Charlemagne distinguished himself as a mediator in this controversy; he ordered four books concerning images to be composed, refuting the reasons urged by the Nicene bishops to justify the worship of images, which he sent to Adrian, the Roman pontiff, in 790, in order to engage him to withdraw his approbation of the decrees of the last council of Nice. Adrian wrote an answer; and in 794, a council of three hundred bishops, assembled by Charlemagne, at Franckfort on

the Maine, confirmed the opinion contained in the four books, and solemnly condemned the worship of images.

In the Greek church, after the banishment of Irene, the controversy concerning images broke out anew, and was carried on by the contending parties, during the half of the ninth century, with various and uncertain success. The emperor Nicephorus appears upon the whole to have been an enemy to this idolatrous worship. His successor, Michael Curopalates, surnamed Rhangabe, patronised and encouraged it. But the scene changed on the accession of Leo, the Armenian, to the empire, who assembled a council at Constantinople, in 812, that abolished the decrees of the Nicene council. His successor, Michael, surnamed Balbus, disapproved of the worship of images, and his son Theophilus, treated their worshippers with great severity. However, the Empress Theodora, after his death, and during the minority of her son, assembled a council at Constantinople in 842, which reinstated the decrees of the second Nicene council, and encouraged image worship by an *edict*. The council held at the same place under Protius, in 879, and reckoned by the Greeks the eighth general council, confirmed and renewed the Nicene decrees. In commemoration of this council, a festival was instituted by the superstitious Greeks, called the *feast of orthodoxy*, which is continued to be celebrated down to our own days, though very few among them, not even excepting the Greek priests themselves, know the reason of its being instituted.

The Latin church of the ninth century was generally of opinion, that images might be allowed in the churches for the sake of ornament, or for exciting the devotion of the people; but it absolutely prohibited that any thing like religious worship or

adoration should be paid to them. The council of Paris, assembled in 824, by Louis the Meek, confirmed by a decree this general opinion of the western church, with regard to images; and, at the same time, commanded, under pain of punishment, that Christians should regard them in no other light, than that of church ornaments: nevertheless, the Gallican clergy began to pay a kind of religious homage to the images of saints, and their examples were followed by the Germans and other nations. However the enemies to image worship had still their adherents among the Latins; the most eminent of whom was Claudius, bishop of Turin, who, in 823, ordered all images, and even the cross, to be cast out of the churches, and committed to the flames; and he wrote a treatise, in which he declared both against the use and worship of them. He condemned relics, pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and all voyages to the tombs of saints; and to his writings and labours it was owing, that the city of Turin, and the adjacent country, was, for a long time after his death, much less infected with superstition, than the other parts of Europe. The controversy concerning the sanctity of images, was again revived by Leo, bishop of Chalcedon, in the eleventh century, on occasion of the Emperor Alexius's converting the figures of silver that adorned the portals of the churches into money, in order to supply the exigencies of the state. The bishop obstinately maintained, that he had been guilty of sacrilege, and published a treatise, in which he affirmed, that in these images there resided an inherent sanctity, and that the adoration of Christians ought not to be confined to the persons represented by these images, but should be extended to the images themselves. The emperor assembled a council at Constantinople, which determined that the images of Christ, and of the saints, were to

be honoured only, with a relative worship; and that the invocation and worship were to be addressed to the saints only, as the servants of Christ, and on account of their relation to him as their master. Leo, dissatisfied with these absurd and superstitious decisions, was sent into banishment. Had he lived some centuries later, or down to our own days, he would have little cause to be dissatisfied; for he would find images, and pictures adored and prayed to, even more than he himself pointed out in his treatise; and would find his own theory of their inherent sanctity fully practised upon. From this time forward, image-worship was established both in the eastern and western churches, without receiving any opposition, except from the Albigenses, Waldenses, and others, who were too few in number, and too weak to cause any obstacle to this idolatrous practice, till the middle of the sixteenth century, the era of the reformation, when it was abolished in many parts of the Christian world. It was again confirmed by the council of Trent, about the same time, and is now practised to an extent, which it seldom reached before, in every part of the globe, where popery prevails.

## CHAPTER XXI.

Image-worship in the nineteenth century—Statue of St. Peter—Opinions, as to its identity with one of the pagan divinities of ancient Rome—Story illustrating the vengeance, which it takes on those who dishonour it—Another, whereby it becomes clear that his brazen saintship has the power of protecting his devout worshippers—Reflections.

HAVING, in the foregoing chapter, given a succinct history of the rise and progress of images and

image-worship, according to the views of the best writers on the subject; I shall in this, and some following chapters, endeavour to give some account of the practice of that idolatry on the continent of Europe, and in other places, where popery triumphs.

There are very few churches in Rome, that are not distinguished for the possession of some wonderful and miracle-working image or picture. The prayers, and consequently, the offerings presented at the shrine of those idols, are the sources of great emoluments to the priests attached to their service, and therefore the latter use all the means in their power to cherish and excite the popular devotion towards them. To begin with St. Peter's; that splendid edifice, so renowned through the whole civilised world for the beauty of its architecture, and for the other stupendous master-pieces of the arts, with which it is adorned; its very portal, on which are represented in relievo-figures the actions and miracles of deified men, announces it, at once, as a place dedicated to idolatrous worship. The visitor does not advance more than ten steps up its magnificent and awe-inspiring aisle, before he must lament to find a temple nominally designed for the worship of the true God, polluted by the monstrous superstitions of idolatry. He will observe the bronze statue of St. Peter, seated in a chair of the same metal, and armed in the one hand with the insignia of his office—the keys, as being gate-keeper of heaven—whilst with the other, he seems in the act of bestowing a blessing upon those, who, after having humbly adored him upon their knees, are advancing to kiss his brazen foot, extended for that purpose. This statue or rather idol, placed on his right hand side after entering the church, strongly reminds the visitor of the soul-destroying idolatry practised in the church of Rome. Not far from this, but nearer to the door, he will



see another practical *example* of the system, by which men are led to place their hopes of salvation—not upon the all-atoning blood of Christ, but on the inventions of their fellow-men: he will observe the vessel for holy water, guarded by two marble angels, with wings expanded, and of exquisite workmanship, overflowing with that water, which (so teacheth the Roman church,) freeth from venial sins.\* Thus is the blood of Christ, that (alone) cleanseth from *all sin*, rendered invalid by *the substitution* of other atonements.

The idol statue of St. Peter is supposed to have been worshipped by the ancient Romans under the name of Jupiter Stator, and to have been transformed into a Christian saint, when idolatrous corruption first broke forth in the Western Churches; which event may be dated, as we have already seen, from the beginning of the seventh century. It is true, that there are many opinions afloat respecting the original design and title of it some defending its identity with Jupiter Stator: others again with Jupiter Capitolinus, whilst not few assert, that it had been the statue of the Two-faced Janus, and that the latter's head was knocked off to make room for the

\* The *aqua sancta*, or the holy water, is manifestly another remnant of the pagan superstition, which is to be found scattered through the rites and ceremonies of the church of Rome. It corresponds with the *aqua lustralis* of the ancients, and seems also to be imitated by the Mahometans, who, in a copious shower of clear water, wash themselves from their sins. The Mahometan ablutions, and the Popish *sprinklings* are, then, reducible to one and the same thing—the obtaining remission of sin. The Mahometan way is much the cleaner, and therefore to be preferred; for it, at least, cleanses the body, whereas popish holy water is very often suffered to remain in the churches, till it gets into a state of corruption, and thus becomes highly detrimental to the health of the people. I have often seen a greenish slime upon it in some churches.

head of St. Peter. All agree, however that it formerly represented a heathen god, and that very little alteration was made in it, in order to render it a fitting object for Christian adoration; which adoration it never received with greater marks of devotion and respect, whilst in the character of a Jupiter, than it now receives in its character of first Pope, and gate-keeper of heaven. O happy piece of brass! (the reader will exclaim,) to be thus raised to divine honors! Thrice happy indeed, if it could feel those honors; but unfortunately "it has eyes, but cannot see," and "ears but cannot hear." If it could either hear or see, it would blush and be ashamed of seeing itself, a creature, adored, instead of God the Creator, and would thus show itself more modest than the *soi-disant* Vicar of Christ, who not only suffers himself to be adored daily by those, whom his false doctrines have led out of the right path, but even claims that adoration as his right.

There are many fables related by monkish annalists concerning the power attributed to this idol, and the many favours obtained from its munificent hands by devout worshippers; and also concerning the punishment, which had been inflicted on those, who dared, in any way, trespass against its majesty, or use it with irreverence.

I shall mention one or two stories of this kind, for the purpose of exhibiting the manner, in which image-worship is upheld in the church of Rome, and the ridiculous fables, that are brought forward by its advocates in proof of its acceptance with the Supreme Being.

Many men, perhaps more than thirty, are daily employed at St. Peter's, whose duty it is to keep the church clean, and wipe the dust from the altars, statues, pictures, &c. One of these men, in a moment of gayety, resolved to have a laugh at the wor-

shippers of the brazen idol, St. Peter. For this purpose, he procured some grease and lamp black, and mixing them well together, he watched an opportunity, when no one was present, to besmear with the composition the foot of St. Peter, which is unusually bright from the number of kisses bestowed upon it by the superstitious worshippers. Having laid his snare, he betook himself to another part of the church, where he could observe those that entered; and who, as is the custom, first go to the holy water vessel, and wash themselves with a drop of the purificatory water from their venial sins, after which they advance to pay their *devoirs* to St. Peter, and kiss his foot. He anticipated no small share of amusement, and food for laughter, in seeing those, who kissed the idol's foot, retreating with blackened lips and face from their act of devotion. He had not remained long on the watch, when a foreign bishop with his *attachés* of five or six priests entered the church; and after having been freed from their venial sins by a drop of the sacred element, they, like true papicolists, advanced to the adoration of St. Peter. Having repeated a few *pater nosters*, on their knees before the image, they proceeded to kiss its foot; the bishop showing the example, as it was meet, he being the first in dignity. He carried off, in reward of his devotion, as may be supposed, no small share of the lamp-black, with which it was besmeared; and on being imitated by his followers, they also were not left without their share of it. The plan succeeded so far, to the satisfaction of the wag that devised it. The parties concerned were as yet unconscious of their black lips and faces; and continued their walk through the church, looking at the pictures and examining the statues. They wondered, however, what was ridiculous about them, that they excited the laughter of all whom they met. On look-

ing in the faces of each other, they soon discovered, how the affair stood, and they themselves could not refrain from laughter, when they saw the figure, which their leader, Monsignor the bishop, exhibited with his blackened face. Having retired into one of the sacristies, they obtained water, and with it performed for their faces, what they imagined the holy-water had done for their souls a little before. Inquiries were made for the perpetrator of the *horrid* deed; but no one could be found on whom suspicion could fall; no one, in fine, knew any thing about it. In the course of the day, one of the men mounted a moveable scaffolding, made for the purpose of brushing cobwebs from the ceiling and from other elevated parts of the church, and whilst in the act of performing his office, his foot accidentally slipped, and he fell headlong from a height of more than twenty feet. His companions ran to his assistance, but he, alas! was speechless. Instead of procuring surgical aid, the whole cry was for the "holy oil" in order to anoint him. Whilst the priest was anointing him, he uttered a few indistinct words from which the by-standers could gather, that he was the person who impiously profaned the statute of St. Peter. The words that he uttered were, "O San Pietro, sei vindicato." O Saint Peter, thou art revenged. In fact, the sufferer turned out to be the wag, who had polluted St. Peter's foot. Being carried to one of the public hospitals, he there recovered so far as to be able to confess the whole occurrence, and to acknowledge, that the accident which befell him was a just punishment for his impiety. He died shortly after—fortunately indeed for himself, for had he recovered, he would have been sent to the galleys for life. This accident afforded a theme to the monks and other priests for preaching the great power of the idol statue, and the punish-

ment, which all those are sure to meet with, who impiously commit any thing against the honor and respect due to it. A pamphlet was shortly after published by order of the pope, wherein were related the miracles performed by the agency of the brazen St. Peter, and the signal vengeance, which, on more occasions than one, the latter had taken on those that dishonoured his statue. A procession composed of all the clergy in Rome was made to the image in order to appease the wrath of the angry deity—not God, but Peter or his idol—and many days indulgences were granted to all, who devoutly salute and kiss his brazen foot on entering the church. Thus an accident, which may as well have happened to the greatest devotee in the church, as to the one, who, through levity, seemingly dishonored the statue, was made a foundation, on which to build up new lying wonders, and thereby stir up the people to an increase of devotion towards the wooden, and brazen gods of popery.

The foregoing story may serve for an example of the punishment, which St Peter inflicts upon those, who dare dishonour his image: the following will exemplify the rewards he bestows upon his faithful worshippers. A Roman lady of a respectable family, being involved by unavoidable misfortunes in great pecuniary difficulties, had recourse to the brazen image of St. Peter, as her last hope of obtaining wherewith to support her rank in society, and give her children an education suitable to their birth. She was left a widow with a large family. Her husband had died suddenly, and his property was seized upon by his creditors. She had, whilst living in affluence, a very great devotion towards the image of St. Peter, which is worshipped in the church called after his name at Rome, and was wont for a number years to visit it



daily, and prostrating herself before it, to *pour forth her soul in prayer, and thanksgiving*. This pious exercise, she did not discontinue on being plunged into poverty; nay, poverty had quite a contrary effect upon her, for it only made her more urgent in her prayers, and excited her to cast her afflictions at the feet of the blessed apostle, and confidently demand his assistance. The greater number of her children were females, (the legend does not say, how many they were in all,) two of whom were now marriageable, and although of handsome person—they were nevertheless unable to find any young men, their equals, who would be willing to take them as wives, on account of their want of fortune. One of them was sought in marriage by a rich man, who, upon discovering her want of dowry, withdrew his suit. This was most painful to the afflicted mother, who had no other way to assuage her grief, than to proceed, as usual, to St. Peter's, and recommend herself and family to the protection of the prince of the apostles. The blessed apostle compassionating the poor woman's affliction, and being, moreover, well pleased \* with the heartfelt devotion she exhibited towards himself, resolved to mitigate her sufferings, and present her with the means of portioning her daughters. For this purpose, he appeared to her in a dream, and command-

\* This will bring to the reader's memory the description of sacrifices offered up to appease the wrath of an offended heathen god. The description of such sacrifices are frequently to be met with in the ancient Greek and Latin poets. The god, in whose honour they are performed, is represented "well pleased," with the odour of the burnt offerings. The modern god Peter, is represented by his devotees, well pleased with the prayers offered up to himself; without considering, how much such prayers derogate from the honour due to the only true God.

her to approach the throne of his successor in the government of the Christian church, and lay open to him her difficulties, adding, that he himself would prepare the mind of the vicar of Christ for her reception. She, upon awaking from sleep, recollected the dream, but imagining it to be a delusion of the imagination, neglected to perform what she was commanded. On returning to the church the following day, she cast herself, as she was accustomed to do, on her knees before the image of St. Peter, and renewed her former supplications. The apostle appeared to her again, whilst in an extacy on her knees, and chided her for not obeying his commands. She considered this second vision, as well as the first, a delusion; and accordingly treated it as such. In fine, St. Peter appeared to her the third time, (there is some great virtue attached to the number "three," by popular superstition,) and with an angry countenance commanded her to proceed forthwith to his successor, the reigning pope, and ask from him in his (St. Peter's) name, for as much as might be sufficient for the decent maintenance of herself and family. She now resisted no longer; and immediately set about obtaining access to the throne of His Holiness; being confident, that the communication made to her was not a delusion of the imagination, but had its foundation in truth. On obtaining an audience, and after going through the usual ceremonies practised by all, who approach the presence of the Vicar of Christ, (such as kissing the slipper, falling upon the knees, &c.) she related the visions, with which she had been favoured by the prince of the apostles; and how he had commanded her to lay her necessities and troubles before him, his successor in the government of the church. The *Holy Father* (thus the pope is styled,) listened to her with kindness and attention; and after

she had concluded her address, told her, that he himself had also been visited by St. Peter, who exhorted him to receive with kindness a poor widow, who would in a short time present herself before him. He then related his own vision to the surrounding attendants, all of whom fell on their knees, and adored the holy representative of Christ, who was thus manifestly guided in his actions by the influence of the Holy Spirit. He exhorted the holy widow to persevere in her devotion towards the image of St. Peter, and promised to provide from the public treasury, for herself and her children. This promise was fulfilled a short time afterward: an annuity was settled upon the widow by command of His Holiness, and her children were provided for in different ways; some being established in the married state, and others dedicated to the service of the church, in which they became useful members, through the powerful protection of their patron, the brazen idol of St. Peter. Thus, (continues the annalist) was this pious widow, and her family relieved from poverty and distress, by the favour of the blessed apostle, who took that method to reward those, who were devoted to his worship. By her example, all should be excited to a firm reliance upon his power and goodness, and to a heart-felt adoration of his sacred image.

By such absurd and ridiculous tales as these related, is the popular superstition kept alive, and the minds of the people imbued with the soul-killing system of idolatry, which Rome teaches her followers in lieu of the life-giving truth, as it is in Jesus. By giving credence to the lying wonders, and nonsensical inventions of monks, and other self-interested men, they are led to place their hopes, not only of temporal blessings, but also, of everlasting salvation, on the intercession and protection of

the Saint, whose image they worship with peculiar devotion, and *not* on the providential care of God, and the all-sufficient atonement of His Son. Indeed, so deluded do the people become by the incessant repetition of such tales by their priests, in the confessional, pulpit, and private conversations, that they almost lose all forms of Christian worship, and give themselves up entirely to the worship of the fictitious gods of brass and wood. Among the uneducated peasantry—especially, fables of this kind gain the greatest credence. Nothing is talked of in their meetings and conversations with each other, but the favours bestowed on some of their neighbours at the intercession of Saint *Such-a-one*, whose image is worshipped in *such a place*. If their sheep should be infected with the rot, or their vineyards destroyed by hail; do they, perhaps, recur to Him, who alone can effectually assist them? No, indeed, for this would be too much like Christianity. By the advice of the priest, masses must be celebrated, and candles offered at the shrine of some Saint, in order to appease the anger of the god, who inhabits it.

## CHAPTER XXII.

Images of the Virgin Mary—La Santa Casa di Loreto—History of the Holy House—Income of the priests attached to it—Sale of vermin—The miraculous image of the Virgin Mary at Basil—Expedient of the priests for reviving the dying superstition—Letter of the Virgin Mary to a reformed clergyman—Notes explanatory of the foregoing letter—Late repentance—Litany of the Virgin—St. Peter, gate-keeper of Heaven—Gulielmus—George—St. Anthony, protector of swine—Different offices assigned to the crowd of saints in the popish calendar.—Reflections.

WERE I to make separate mention of half the wonderful images, which are scattered up and down through the different churches of Italy, I should be obliged to transgress the limits, laid down for this work: indeed, a simple catalogue of their names alone, would fill a good-sized volume. I shall, therefore, not to tire the reader, confine myself to a few of the more remarkable, passing over in silence those of less note. Of the former class, wherever they are to be found, whether at Rome or Turin, Milan or Naples, the images of the *Madonna* are always held in the greatest estimation, and innumerable miracles are said to be performed in favour of those, who devoutly pray before them. The *Madonna* answers in every respect to a heathen goddess, and perhaps the worship paid to her different pictures and statues, is more revolting than that paid to the celebrated image of the Ephesian Diana. Her statues and pictures are so numerous, that, had she the power of animating one fourth of them, she could justly be said, to have acquired, in some de-



gree, the attribute of ubiquity, if not in her own person, at least in that of the various statues and pictures by which she is represented. Some of these, but especially the pictures, are master-pieces of art, while others, on the contrary, do not, in any way flatter the virgin for her personal beauty. They are, however, generally of the former class; some countenances being so exquisitely beautiful, that they probably gave rise to the well known verses of a late poet, who, when relating the early education of his Spanish hero, represents him as

Turning from martyrs and hermits hairy,  
To the sweet pictures of the Virgin Mary.

Pictures and images of the Madonna are placed in the principal streets of Rome and other cities, to which are affixed lamps, kept burning all night in honour of the goddess. Indulgences are granted to all, who bow down before them, and repeat a few Pater nosters and Ave Marias in their honour. A tablet is always attached to the frame, or to some other part of the picture, on which is written its history, the manner it was discovered, and the numerous favours obtained at its intercession. Some are related to have been sent down from Heaven; others, to have fled of their own accord from the hands of Turks, or other infidels; others to have moved the head, or eyes; in fine, there is no picture of the Madonna, to which popular superstition does not attribute some miracle or other. The number of days' or years' indulgences to be obtained for the trouble of repeating a "Pater noster," and "Ave Maria," is then related, followed by the signature and seal of the pope or bishop, by whom such indulgences have been granted. The usual form of these grants is conceived in words of the following import, either in Latin or Italian, but more fre-

quently in the latter language : Monsignor N—, or Sua Santità N—, concede un anno, d'indulgenza a tutti li fedeli, per ogni volta, che divotamente recitano “un pater noster ed un ave Maria,” avanti questa sacra imagine di Maria santissima. (The most Reverend Bishop N—, or His Holiness N—, grants one year's indulgence to all the faithful for every time they devoutly repeat “*the Lord's prayer, and the hail Mary,*” before this sacred image of *the most holy Mary.*)

The image of the Virgin, to which all her other images yield the palm, is that worshipped at Loretto, an insignificant village in the pope's states. This image is preserved in the “santa casa,” or holy house, which tradition reports—and the pope has sealed such a report with his infallible authority, so as to make it an article of faith, and therefore essential to the salvation of man—to have been transported by angels from Nazareth to Dalmatia, and thence to the papal states, where it now remains. In a book, expressly designed for instructing in the miracles, and history of the Holy House, the pilgrims, who come in crowds from all parts of Italy, and other countries, in order to pay their *devoirs* to the Virgin, there may be found the following narrative of the manner, in which the papal states obtained possession of this miraculous house, and of the equally miraculous image and relics, which are preserved in it for the adoration of the faithful. This book is called “La storia della casa miracolosa della Vergine Maria Lauretana,” (The history of the miraculous house of the Virgin Mary of Loretto,) printed at the Vatican press, and approved by the “Master of the sacred apostolic palace,”—colla approvazione della sacra aula apostolica.—Hence there can be no doubt, that the monstrous lies, which are embodied in it, are sanctioned by the authority of *the infalli-*

*ble church*, and of its equally *infallible head*, the pope. It begins with the bull of pope *Somebody*, confirming its contents, and anathematizing, as usual, all, who would call in question, the truth of any thing related in it. It then goes on to inform its reader, that the Holy House was built in Nazareth of Galilee by Joachim, the father of the Virgin Mary, and that at his death, he bequeathed it to his beloved daughter, the mother of Christ. That Jesus was educated, and lived in this same house for twelve years, and assisted Joseph, his mother's husband, who exercised the trade of a carpenter under its roof. After the death of Mary—who, by the way, is believed to have been taken alive into Heaven, by what authority, I never could learn—the house continued in the possession of her nearest in kindred, till the time of Titus Vespasian, who with his conquering army devastated Galilee, and razed the town of Nazareth to the ground. The Holy House was at this time protected by a corps of angels, sent down from Heaven, to guard it, so that Titus could not remove one single stone, or cause any damage to it. It remained quietly in Nazareth, till the year 1291, when Galilee falling into the hands of the infidels, and every Christian being put to the sword, the Holy House thought it full time to consult for its own preservation. It, accordingly, commanded its angel-guards to lift it from its foundations, and transfer it to some Christian country. The angels, obedient to the commands, immediately complied, and bare it through the air into Dalmatia. There it remained for three years, when taking offence at the irreverence, with which it was treated by the inhabitants, it again emigrated, and by the same agency, as on the former occasion, it was set down in a wood convenient to the town of Recanati, in the papal state. The trees bowed down to the

ground at its approach, and thus remained in reverence during the eight months it remained in their neighbourhood. But being of a migratory disposition, and unwilling to bear the seclusion, in which it was held by being stationed in the middle of a thick forest, it again took flight, and established itself contentedly at Loretto, where it now remains. Nor is it likely that it will soon leave the latter place, for it is imprisoned in a magnificent church, built designedly for that purpose. "Thus," (says this *veracious* history,) "has God vouchsafed to grant to the country, wherein he established the chief seat of his religion, a convincing proof of the estimation, in which that country is held by Him; and a sure refuge in the hour of peril to those, who flee for protection under the wings of the mother of his Son—sotto l'ale della madre del suo figlio."

This image, to which so many miracles are attributed, and before which so many disgusting scenes of worse than pagan idolatry are daily practised, is black, and so extremely ugly, that certainly it cannot be for its beauty that it is held in such estimation. It is gaudily dressed, and literally laden with magnificent jewels, and other precious articles. An infant, representing the child Jesus, is placed in its arms, of the same colour as the mother, and also surrounded by a magnificent show of finery. Devotees come from all parts of Italy on pilgrimages to this shrine, to whom the dust of the walls, the cobwebs, nay, even the very spiders, are sold at extraordinary prices; for the image and house are not only *holy* themselves, but also give holiness to whatever is touched by them. I have seen myself, on visiting Loretto about four years ago, a pebble taken from the walls of the Santa Casa, sold for ten Roman scudi, or dollars, and an unfortunate mouse, that was found concealing itself among the folds of

the Virgin's dress, sold for as much as would buy a good ox. This mouse was embalmed by the gentleman who bought it,—a Piedmontese pilgrim; and enclosed in a silver box, to be kept by him and his posterity, as a certain and infallible remedy against all diseases and accidents. But about relics, more in the sequel.

Every mass celebrated within the Santa Casa is paid for at the most extraordinary price. I have been assured by the keepers of the house, who were monks of my own order—Capuchins; that between masses and lands, and the gifts of the pilgrims, the annual income of the church, at Loretto, amounts to more than 50,000 dollars. The French army, whilst in Italy, took the liberty of depriving the Madonna of the greater part of her treasure, having pillaged the church of whatever things of value they could lay hands upon. The chest, in which were preserved some valuable gems, was secreted by one of the old priests, and by him restored after the French evacuated Italy. This act of honesty is really worthy of praise, if it were done through an unwillingness to keep what did not belong to him; but it is very probable, that his virtue would hardly resist the temptation, had the gems belonged to any less powerful personage than the Madonna, and I am, therefore, inclined to think, that superstition had a greater influence on his mind than natural honesty. Be that as it may, it is certain, that the gems saved from the French soldiery were returned, and are now used for decorating the person of her smutty majesty, the Queen of Heaven. There is a dean and chapter attached to the church of Loretto, whose duty it is to recite daily the office of the Madonna, and of some other saints, for which they receive a princely salary. Twelve Capuchins are also of the goddess' household, and these have the care of the holy house, as it would be deemed a mortal sin, and to be



atoned for only by death, if any one less than a priest dared to enter the presence of the queen. To them, therefore, it belongs to sweep and clean the holy house, and to collect the sanctified dust, the insects, vermin, and all other things, of no value in themselves, but of the greatest, when *touched* either designedly, or accidentally, by the garments, or any other thing belonging to the Holy Virgin. Nor is this all, the things touched by the image have also received the power of sanctifying other things in turn; but the latter are esteemed of minor efficacy than the former, and therefore are not so much sought after. The Capuchins are paid so much annually for their services, as domestics of the Virgin—I believe 500 dollars each; and have also no small emolument from the sale of the sweepings which they collect, and which, or rather the money obtained for them from idiotical pilgrims, they are obliged to divide fairly, with the other persons belonging to her majesty's suit. Thus the Italian proverb "*vendere lucciole per lanterne*"—to sell fire-flies for lanterns, is literally acted upon by those deceivers of the souls of their fellow-creatures.

A relation of the many fables and pseudo-miracles which are propagated by the priests and monks, attached to the service of the Lauretan goddess, would be found quite uninteresting to the reader. I shall, therefore, pass them over in silence, only remarking, that they are so numerous, as to fill five ponderous folio volumes, entitled, in Latin, "*Flores et miracula Virginis Mariæ Lauretanæ*:"—the flowers and miracles of the Virgin Mary of Loretto; and so ridiculous and glaringly false, as to make the most zealous advocates of popery blush for the honour and veracity of their infallible church;—and this is saying a great deal, for it is no easy matter to make either popish divines, or popish anna-

lists blush through consciousness of having committed to writing a monstrous farrago of lies, especially when they are aware that such falsehoods were fabricated for "the good of the church," and that, therefore, the end always excuses the means.

There existed a famous miracle-working image of the Madonna in the city of Basil, before the reformation. This image was of stone, and drew pilgrims from all parts of Italy and France to its shrine, whence the priests, attached to its service, derived great emoluments. Upon the breaking out of the reformation in Germany, and when the people began to be instructed in the pure religion of Christ, pilgrimages to the shrine of this idol became every day less frequent, and as Gospel-light made greater progress, they were discontinued altogether. This was severely felt by the priests, who, in order to make a last struggle for the revival of the nearly extinct superstition, thought upon an expedient, by which they hoped to recover, in part, their unhalloved gains. Ridiculous as it may seem, this was no other than to forge a letter addressed to the people of Basil, which they gave out to be written in heaven by the Virgin Mary herself, and brought by angels, who placed it at the foot of her statue, where it was found by a pious priest, devoted to the worship of the marble-virgin. In this letter she chides the people for their want of devotion towards her image, and, like another offended Diana, threatens them with heavy chastisement, unless they immediately make reparation to her insulted deity. Erasmus has founded his letter of the Virgin, written also in heaven, to a Lutheran minister of the 15th century, on this forgery of the priests of Basil. He wittily ridicules the prevailing superstition of that period, and makes the Virgin say, what very probably she would say, had she been able to hear the

blasphemous prayers and vows offered up at her shrines, by the deluded victims of popish errors. It may not be thought superfluous to give the letter entire, as it exists in the colloquy called "*peregrinatio religionis ergo*," (wandering through religious motives.) It is addressed, under a fictitious name, to some zealous reformed clergyman of that period, and is feigned to have been found by him in the pulpit, on his ascending it to address his congregation: "Mary, the mother of Jesus, to Glaucoptulus, health. Because following the doctrines of Luther, you teach that it is useless to invoke the saints, know, that you have obtained great favour with me on this account. For, before your preaching, but little was wanting that I was not killed from listening to the wicked petitions of mankind. From me alone every thing was demanded, as if my son was for ever to remain an infant, as he is painted in my arms; and as if he entirely depended upon my will, and would not dare deny any thing which I might be pleased to ask of him, fearing lest I, in turn, should deny him the breast, when he would feel desirous to drink. Sometimes these, my worshippers, demand from me, a virgin, things which a modest youth could scarcely have the face to ask from a woman of ill-fame; things, indeed, which I am ashamed to commit to writing. The merchant setting out for Spain recommends to my care the chastity of his concubine. The nun, dedicated to God, thinking upon flying from her nunnery, and having thrown aside her veil, leaves to my care the fame of her integrity, which she herself is on the point of prostituting. The impious soldier, hired to butcher his fellow-creatures, cries out before me, "O blessed Virgin, give me a plentiful harvest of plunder." The gamester cries out, "favour me, O goddess, a part of the gains will be given to you;"

and if the game should turn against him, he reproaches and curses me, because I was not propitious and favourable to his wickedness. The harlot, who lets out her body for hire, prays, "give me an abundant income;" and if I deny her, then she exclaims, "that I am not a *mother of mercy*." The prayers of others are not so wicked as they are foolish. The unmarried girl exclaims, "give me, O holy Mary, a handsome and rich husband." The married, "give me handsome children." The *en-ceinte*, "give me an easy *accouchement*." The old woman, "grant me a long life, without cough or thirst. The childish old man, "grant me the power of again becoming young." The philosopher prays for the power of forming incomprehensible arguments; the priest prays for a rich benefice; the bishop, for the protection of his church; the sailor, for prosperous voyages; the courtier, for a sincere confession of his sins at the hour of death; <sup>(1)</sup> the farmer, for seasonable rain; the farmer's wife, for the health and preservation of the cattle. If I deny any of these favours, immediately I am called "a cruel woman;" and if I send them to my son, I am then answered "he wishes whatever you wish." Thus on me alone, a *woman and a virgin*, is thrown the care of sailors, soldiers, merchants, gamesters, bachelors, women in travail, kings, and husbandmen. But I am now less troubled with business of this kind, for which I should have been very thankful to you, had not this advantage brought with it also disadvantages: there is less trouble, but there is also less honour, and less emoluments. Before your preaching, I was saluted "*Queen* <sup>(2)</sup> *of the heavens*;" "Mistress of the world;" now I scarcely hear from a few worshippers "*Hail Mary*." Before, I was clad in gems and gold; I had a well supplied wardrobe; rich gifts were offered to me: now

I am scarcely covered with the half of an old cloak, and that same gnawed by mice; whilst my annual income is scarcely sufficient for the support of one miserable priest, who might light a little lamp, or a tallow-candle in honour of me. But I could even suffer these things, degrading as they are, had not even worse been in preparation. You have a design, people say, of thrusting out of the sacred temples the whole crowd of gods! (saints!) Beware, again and again beware of what you are about. There are not wanting to the other gods ways and means of revenging the injuries committed against their majesty. If Peter<sup>(3)</sup> be shut out of the temple, take care, that he, in retaliation, shut not against you the gate of the heavenly kingdom. Paul<sup>(4)</sup> has a sword, and Bartholomew<sup>(5)</sup> is armed with a knife; William, under the habit of a monk, will be found encased in a heavy coat of mail, and brandishing a long spear.<sup>(6)</sup> But how are you to defend yourself against George,<sup>(7)</sup> a knight, surrounded with armed men, and formidable both on account of his lance and sword? Nor is Anthony<sup>(8)</sup> himself unarmed, for he has the sacred fire. There are also their peculiar arms to the other gods, which they use in inflicting on their enemies sickness, and other misfortunes, which cannot be cured without the invocation of their assistance.<sup>(9)</sup> \* As for my own part, you certainly shall not thrust me, though unarmed, from the temple, unless you also thrust out my son, whom I hold in my arms. I will not suffer myself to be violently separated from him; for either you must turn him out with me, or suffer both of us to remain, unless, indeed, you choose rather a temple without a Christ. These things I wished to make known to you; do you ponder what answer is to be returned to me,

\* See Notes from 1 to 9, at the end of this chapter.



for I am deeply interested in the subject. Dated from my marble temple, on the calends of August, in the year of my crucified son, 1524.

I, a marble virgin, have signed it with my own hand.

#### MARY-VIRGIN, THE MOTHER OF JESUS.

I subjoin the original Latin, for the satisfaction of those, who may *feel* desirous of seeing this curious epistle in its original language. It is, like all other of Erasmus' writings, written with classical purity, and in a style well worthy of imitation by all lovers of pure latinity. It is, indeed, widely different from the barbarisms of the greater part of Romish theologians, who had not even the merit of conveying their errors in beautiful language; indeed, the whole merit of their works consisted in being *incomprehensible*.

Maria mater Jesu Glaucopluto S. D. Quod Lutherum sequutus strenue suades, supervacaneum esse invocare divos, a me quidem isto nomine bonam magnamque inivisti gratiam, scito. Nam ante hoc, tantum non enecabar improbis mortalium opplorationibus. Ab una postulabantur omnia, quasi filius meus semper infans esset, quia talis fingitur, pingiturque in sinu meo, ut ex nutu matris adhuc pendeat, neque quidquam ausit negare petenti, videlicet metuens, ne si quid neget roganti, ego vicissim ipsi negem mammam sitiendi. Et nonnunquam ea petunt a Virgine, quæ verecundus juvenis vix auderet petere a lena, quæque me pudet litteris committere. Interim negotiator lucri causâ navigaturus in Hispaniam, committit mihi pudicitiam suæ concubinæ. Et virgo Deo sacra, abjecto velo fugam adornans, deponit apud me famam integritatis suæ, quam ipsa tendit prostituere. Occlamat mihi miles & ad lanien-dam conductus, Beata Virgo, da prædam opimam.

Occlamat aleator, Fave, diva, pars lucri tibi decidetur. Et si parum faveat alea, me conviciis lacerant, maleque precantur, quæ non adfuerim sceleri. Occlamat quæ quæstui turpi semet exponit, Da proventum uberem. Si quid negem, illico reclamant, Ergone sis mater misericordiæ. Aliorum vota non tam impia sunt, quam inepta. Clamat innupta, Da mihi formosum ac divitem sponsum. Clamat nupta, Da mihi bellos catulos. Clamat gravida, Da mihi facilem partum. Clamat anus: Da diu vivere sine tussi sitique. Clamat senex delirus: Da repubescere. Clamat philosophus: Da nodos insolubiles nectere. Clamat sacerdos: Da sacerdotium opimum. Clamat episcopus: Serva meam ecclesiam. Clamat nauta: Da prosperos cursus. Clamat aulicus: Da vere confiteri in articulo mortis. Clamat rusticus: Da tempestivam pluviam. Clamat rustica: Serva gregem et armentum incolume. Si quid renuo, illico sum crudelis. Si relego ad filium, audio: Vult ille, quidquid tu vis. Itane ego sola et mulier et virgo dabo operam navigantibus, belligerantibus, negotiantibus, ludentibus aleam, nubentibus, parturientibus, regibus, et agricolis? Atqui quod dixi, minimum est præ his quæ patior. Sed his negotiis nunc multo minus gravor: quo quidem nomine tibi gratias agerem maximas, nisi commodum hoc incommodum majus secum traheret: plus est otii, sed minus est honorum, minus est opum. Antea salutabar Regina cœlorum, Domina mundi: nunc vix a paucis audio, Ave Maria. Antea vestiebar gemmis et auro, abundabam mutatoriis, deferebantur aurea gemmeaque donaria: nunc vix tegor dimidiato palliolo, eoque corroso a muribus. Proventus autem annui vix tantum, ut alam miserum œdituum, qui accendat lucernulam aut candelam sebaceam. Atque hæc tamen poterant ferri, ni majora etiam moliri dicereris. Huc tendis, ut ajunt, ut quidquid usquam est divo-

rum, exigas ex ædibus sacris. Etiam atque etiam, vide quid agas. Non deest aliis divis quo suam ulciscantur injuriam. Ejectus e templo Petrus, potest tibi vicessim occludere regni cœlestis ostium. Paulus habet gladium; Bartholemæus cultro armatus est; Guilielmus sub pallio monachi totus armatus est, non sine gravi lancea. Quid autem agas cum Georgio et equite et cataphracto, hasta simul et gladio formidabili? Nec inermis est Antonius; habet secum sacrum ignem. Sunt item et cæteris sua vel arma, vel mala, quæ, quibus volunt, immittunt. Me vero quantumvis inermem, non tamen ejicies, nisi simul ejecto filio, quem ulnis teneo. Ab hoc non me patiar divelli: aut hunc una mecum extrudes, aut utrumque relinques, nisi mavis habere templum sine Christo. Hæc te scire volui: tu cogita, quid mihi respondendum censeas. Nam mihi plane res cordi est. Ex æde nostra lapidea, calendis Augusti, anno filii mei passi 1524. Virgo lapidea meâ manu subscripsi.

#### MARIA VIRGO MATER JESU.

(1) *Hour of Death.*—Many papists imagine, that if they be so fortunate as to be able to make a true confession of their sins, when at the point of death; and if they obtain absolution from the mouth of the priest; they can have no difficulty, whatever be their former lives, or however sinfully they may have lived, of immediately entering heaven, or at least purgatory. It is distressing to think on the number of immortal souls lost, irretrievably lost for all eternity, who died trusting to this delusive hope. The pagan poet thought better on this subject than popish theologians; for he expressly says, “late repentance is seldom true,”—perhaps never—*“Pœnitentia sera raro vera est.”*

(2) In the litany of the Virgin, sung by immense numbers of her devotees, before the images or pictures representing her with the child Jesus in her arms, she is styled, “the Queen of Heaven; the refuge of sinners; the help of Christians; morning star; our only hope; consoler of the afflicted;” with many other epithets,

all derogating from the honour of God, and offensive to the ears of those who have at heart the pure unadulterated worship of their Creator.

(3) It has been mentioned before, that St. Peter is made the gate-keeper of Heaven ; or, as a Frenchman would call him, "le Suisse." He is always painted with keys of immense size, either suspended from his girdle, or in his hands. St. Paul is also painted with a sword in his hands ; for what reason, I do not know, unless it be, that the sword was the instrument of his martyrdom. The Apostle Bartholomew is represented holding a knife, in some of his pictures; though in others, he is painted holding a cross, made in the form of the letter X, on which tradition says, he suffered death.

(4) and (5)—See the note (9).

(6) Guilielmus, or William, is said to have been a Roman Knight, who suffered death in one of the early ages of the church. He is said to have relinquished all his secular greatness, and to have become a monk in one of the eremitical monasteries of Egypt. Being brought before the Roman governor, he was commanded to sacrifice to the idols, and upon refusing, was given over to the executioner.

(7) George was tribune of the soldiers (tribunus militum) under Diocletian. Having refused to abjure the religion of Christ, he was, by command of that persecuting emperor, given up to be devoured by wild beasts. He is made by papists, the special protector of soldiers, on account, I suppose, of his former profession. Query. Is he the same with St. George, the patron Saint of England ?

(8) St. Anthony, the protector of swine and swine-herds, is also celebrated for the power, which he is supposed to possess of curing a cutaneous disease, called after his name, "*St. Anthony's fire*." He is painted in the dress of a monk, surrounded with a herd of swine, who seem to regard their keeper with marks of affection ; if it be possible, that affection could be portrayed on the face of a—pig. Some painters have attempted it, and I have seen one painting in a church, dedicated to this saint, wherein affection was admirably expressed on the faces of these self-willed animals. He is worshipped with peculiar devotion among the mountains of Norcia and Ascoli, by reason of these mountains being planted with innumerable oak trees, on the acorns of which the swine are

fattened. The owners, in order to call down his blessing upon their flocks, build altars to his honour, and worship him in many other extravagant, as well as unchristian ways.

(9) Papists, as well as pagans, of old, attribute a peculiar power to each of their saints. Thus, different offices are assigned to different saints. One, is made the patron of those, who labour under a sore throat, as St. Blaisius; another of women labouring in child-birth; another of children, &c. The saints are said to vindicate themselves on their luke-warm worshippers, by sending down upon them the disease, which they themselves have the power of curing. St. Rocco, who is the patron of those sick of the plague, is also thought to be of service to those labouring under the venereal disease, and a story is related of his having miraculously cured of this detestable malady, one of his devout worshippers. John the Baptist, is supposed to have the power of afflicting with the *fallen sickness*, those with whom he has cause to be angry. Hubert can afflict his opponents with a decline—and so on, of the other saints. Each trade in Rome has its own peculiar saint-protector. St. Crispin is made the patron of shoemakers, St. Luke of painters, because tradition relates, that he was of that trade; and there is shown in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore at Rome, a picture of the Madonna, painted by him, which is said to have performed many miracles. Though we learn from the Apostolical epistles, that he was a physician, yet greater belief is given to the vague tradition of his having been a painter, and therefore he is made a patron of painters, and not of physicians—though, indeed, the latter have generally too much good sense to claim his protection for their profession, or to be angry of his not being dubbed their patron. Mary Magdalen is the protector of harlots, and Cecilia of singers and musicians—and in fine, every trade, every profession, every malady, and every occurrence of life, have each and every one of them, their own particular saint and protector, who is worshipped by those interested with greater devotion than they ever worship the *one and true God*. The reader will easily discern, from what has been said on this subject, the great affinity there is between popery and paganism. If the pagans had their Mercury, their Mars, their Apollo, their Juno, and their Venus; the papists have their Francis, their George, their Christopher, their Peter, their Cecilia, their Mary Magdalen, and, to govern all,



they have their queen of heaven—their Madonna. But I fear the reader is long since tired by the repetition of such trash, and no wonder, for indeed, I have carried the subject farther than the limits of a note would warrant.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

Continuation of remarks upon image-worship—Popish unity—*Madonna della lettera* at Messina—The Virgin Mary a linguist—Copy of the Virgin's letter to the Messinians—Translation of the foregoing—Spain, and its idolatries—Spanish Jesuits—Spanish form of Salutations—Portugal—Don Miguel favored by the Priests—A miracle wrought in confirmation of his authority—The Virgin delivered of a boy twelve years old—Effect of the discovery on Don Miguel's Government—Concluding remarks upon image-worship.

THERE are other celebrated Madonnas scattered through the different churches of Italy; each one of which has its own particular history, and its own miracles attached to it; for popery is certainly *one* in more senses than its advocates imagine, when they take unity as an argument in favour of i's being the *true* church of Christ. It is *one* also in its system of imposture; the same arts are made use of, and the same lies fabricated for its support in the capital of Spain, as in the capital of Italy; in the city of the false prophet, as in the country of Confucius; there being subjects of the pope both in the one and the other, as we learn from the relation of travellers, and as is evident from students of these countries being educated at the college of the Propaganda in Rome. Miracles then, and other lying wonders are fabricated on the spot by the acting ministers of popery, in every country where it exists; and for this reason,

the idolizing of the Madonna being an essential article of that church her images are all supplied with stories and miracles by the priests of the country, where such images are worshipped; differing very little, if any at all (for the imagination of an inventor of falsehoods is with time exhausted,) from the miracles attributed to images of the same, worshipped in very distant parts of the world. I shall relate a story of one more Italian Madonna, venerated in the cathedral church of Messina in Sicily, and then pass on to a view of image-worship, as practised in other parts of Europe.

As Naples has its Januarius to protect it from the burning lava of Vesuvius; so also has Messina its Madonna to protect it from the like evil threatened to it from its vicinity to Mongibello, or Mount Etna. The Madonna of the Messinians (called also "la Madonna della lettera) if we believe the history of it, as preserved in the archives of the cathedral of Messina, was sent down from Heaven and placed on the altar where it now stands, by the hands of angels; for the especial protection of the inhabitants. The virgin was well pleased with the *Novenas*, *Triduos*, &c.\* performed in honor of her, and to manifest this pleasure to her faithful people, she thought it advisable, (if we can use such a word, when speaking of a goddess) to send them her image manufactured in heaven, in token of it—just as a young woman makes a present of her portrait to her lover, in token of her love. The image was accompanied by a letter addressed to the bishop, clergy and laity of the diocese of Messina, wherein she assures them of her perpetual protection and favour, in reward of

\* Novena and triduo. By such terms are meant certain days set apart for the more particular worship of the gods of popery. The former is a feast of nine days' continuance, the latter of three.

their devotion towards her, and encourages them to continue in rendering her the honours due to her, as the “mother of Christ,” “gate of heaven,” “and “consoler of the afflicted:” assuring them at the same time, that such honours paid to her were most pleasing to her son, Jesus; and not in the least displeasing to him, as modern heretics, jealous of her glory, would insinuate. This epistle is written in Latin,\* and enclosed in a silver case, whence it is never taken out, but to satisfy the curiosity of some dignitary of the church; or of those, who are able to bribe the keeper for a more close inspection of it. I myself have had the honour of *kissing* the case, and of humbly repeating an “*ave Maria*” before the sacred *scrap of paper*. With much difficulty I obtained a copy of it, which I have since lost, but having read it so often, I feel confident, that I retain in mind the form and subject—if not the very words. To the best of my recollection, it runs as follows.

“Maria Virgo, mundi Redemptoris mater, Episcopo, clero, cæterisque fidelibus inclytæ civitatis Messanensis salutem et benedictionem a se, suoque filio impertit. Quod meo cultui consulere in mentem vobis ventum est, magnum favorem apud me propter hoc inveniisti, scitote. Jampridem situm periculis plenum vestræ civitatis ob ejus nimiam ad Etneum ignem propinquitatem, haud sine dolore vidi, eaque de re non raro verba habui cum filio meo; sed hactenus ille propter rarum cultum mihi a vobis præ-

\* It is surprising, how learned a Lady the Madonna is, for she understands nearly all languages, as may be seen from the number of her epistles written to the different Latin, Greek, and Armenian churches; all written in the ancient language of the people, to which they are directed; for she seems, either not to understand, or at least to think beneath her notice, all modern languages, as none of her letters are found written in Italian, or in modern Armenian or modern Greek.

stitum iratus, meam intercessionem audire noluit. Nunc autem, vobis resipiscentibus, et cultum mei feliciter inchoantibus, mei juris benigne fecit, ut vestrûm vestræque civitatis æterna protectrix essem; vobis veruntamen magno opere cavendum est, ni hujus erga vos boni animi pœnitere causam mihi dederitis. Mihi vehementer placent orationes et festa in meo honore indicta; et si in his rebus fideliter perseveraveritis, et hæreses nunc temporis per vestrum orbem grassantes, quibus cultus mihi, cæteroque sanctorum sanctarumque cætui debitus maxime periclitatur, summa vi obviam vosmetipsos prebueritis, meâ perpetuâ protectione fruemini. In signo hujus pacti rati, imaginem mei a manibus cælestibus fusam vobis e cælo dimitto; et si eam digno honore tenueritis, signum erit mihi obedientiæ vestræ, et fidei. Valete. Dabam ex cælo, me sedente juxta thronum filii mei, anno ab ejusdem incarnatione millesimo, quingentesimo trigesimo, quarto, mense autem Decembris."

Mary, Virgin and Mother of the Redeemer of the world, to the Bishop, clergy, and the other faithful of Messina, health and blessing from Herself and Her Son.

Because ye have taken measures for establishing the worship of me; know, that ye have thereby found great favour in my sight. Long since I observed, not without pain, the situation of your city, too much exposed to danger from its contiguity to the fires of Etna, and have frequently spoken to my son on that subject; but he being angry, on account of the neglect of my worship, which ye have been guilty of, showed himself unwilling to attend to my intercession. Now, however, that ye have grown wiser, and have happily begun to worship me, I have obtained from him the faculty of being your eternal *protectress*; but I

earnestly advise you at the same time, to be careful, that ye give me no cause of repenting of this my kindness. The prayers and festivals instituted in my honour are exceedingly pleasing to me, and if ye faithfully persevere in observing them, and in opposing with all your might the heresy, which at this time, is spreading through every part of your globe, by which both my worship, and that of the other Saints and Saintesses, is endangered; ye will enjoy my everlasting protection. In sign of the ratification of this agreement, I send you down from Heaven the image of myself,\* cast by celestial hands, and if ye hold it in that honour, which it claims as a representation of me, ye will thereby convince me of your obedience and faith. Farewell. Dated in Heaven, whilst sitting near the throne of my son, in the 1534th year from his incarnation.

MARY VIRGIN.

Then follows the signature and seal of the Bishop, who governed the church of Messina, at that period, in attestation of the genuineness of this curious epistle; and after his name, follow those of his vicar-general, secretary, and of six canons of the Cathedral church. Hence may be learned the degree of credibility to which popish priests and bishops are entitled.

Not in Italy only has the worship of the Virgin superseded the worship of the one and true God;

\* It would appear from this, that the image is made of brass, or some other fusible metal, though it did not appear so to me, when I saw it. I thought, that it was of wood, but I saw the face alone, which is painted, the rest of the body being clothed—of course then I was deceived, for it is to be presumed, that the Virgin Mary knew better than I possible could know, of what this image, which she ordered herself, and which she seems to take such trouble about, is composed.



but in other parts of Europe also, especially in Spain and Portugal, and indeed in every place where the contiguity to Evangelical Christians do not make the favourers of idolatry blush. The contiguity with protestants is very probably the reason, that this article of the popish creed is so little practised upon in the Roman Catholic cantons of Switzerland; for popery approaches nearer to Christianity in the latter country, than I have seen it in any other part of Europe. In Spain, the worship of the Virgin with all its accompanying enormities flourishes, or, at least, did flourish whilst under the tyranny of the *petticoat-embroiderer*\*—the late King Ferdinand. Indeed the Spanish monarchy was as much upheld by the tongues and preaching of the monks and priests, who disseminated the slavish doctrines of popery, (for popery, regarded even in a political light, is essentially a slave making religion,) as by the bayonets and cannons of the Escorial. Spain was formerly more addicted to superstition than even Rome herself. She had her inquisition, and her inquisitors, her monks, and her friars, her nuns and—in fine she had all the paraphernalia of the most abominable irreligion. Her missionaries were the active agents for disseminating the anti-christian doctrines of popery, and helped to brutalize more, perhaps, than any other nation in the world, the people, who were so unfortunate as to fall under their sway. The Spanish Jesuits were certainly the most wily of that wily body. Ignatius Loyola himself, was a Spaniard, and the order, which he

\* It is said, that the late king of Spain, when obliged to flee from Madrid on the approach of Joseph Buonaparte, and the French army, diverted himself at Seville, in the kingly employment of embroidering his wife's petticoats. He would have made a good man-milliner.

instituted, is well known to the world, for the injury which morality and Christianity suffered through its malign influence. Its treachery and deceit was too gross even for Rome herself, and therefore, the head of the Romish church, to avoid greater evils, and to appease the European sovereigns, strongly crying out to a man, for its suppression, was obliged to take away this rock of offence from the eyes of the Christian world. Unwillingly, indeed, did Ganganelli—(Clement XIV.) suppress the order, for he well knew, that he exposed his own life to the attacks, and machinations of the Jesuits. His death, six months after the promulgation of the Bull for their suppression, fully proved, that the pope's fears were not without grounds; for it is related, that he met his death by a slow poison, administered to him by the emissaries of the Jesuits, or by one of that order. Image-worship and Madonna-worship, was carried to more than pagan excess in Spain, through Jesuitical influence. The common salutations of the people fully proved, that they thought more of the Mother, than of the Son, and that they could more justly be called *Virginites*, than Christians. "*Ave Maria purissima*," (Hail Mary, most pure,) answered by "*Sin pecado concebida*," (Conceived without sin,) was the most frequent form of salutation; the more Christian one of "*Va usted con Dios*" (Go with God,) being exploded by common consent, until within a few years back. The churches were adorned with costly images and pictures of this goddess, and divine honours paid to them and to her relics. In fine, an Evangelical Christian, whilst travelling in this country, could hardly bring himself to think, that it had ever been favoured with the light of the Gospel; so much is it given up to the detestable practices of idolatry. After the suppression of the Jesuits, and destruction

of the inquisition, Spain apparently threw off some of the abominations of popery, though she still retains enough of them to make her be distinguished among the other nations of Europe, as a country having the mark of "the beast" stamped on its forehead—not *indelibly*, it is hoped—and the seat of bigotry, tyranny, and superstition.

What has been said of Spain, can also be said with equal justice, when applied to Portugal. The latter country was not without its own share of popish corruptions; indeed, popery reigned there in as much vigour, as in any other part of Europe. *Madonnanism*, or the idolatry of the Virgin was and perhaps *is* still practised there in all its revolting forms. It was renewed with fresh vigour in the late contest for the crown, between Don Miguel and his brother Don Pedro. The former, in order to conciliate the minds of the clergy, and through them, of the people, to his usurped authority, thought it advisable to favour every kind of superstition, and none more so, than the worship of the *Madonna*. The priests, in return, to repay him for his kindness towards themselves, and to excite the popular feelings in his favour, lost no opportunity of preaching the justice of his cause, of praising him for his attention to religious ceremonies, and of holding him forth as a most holy personage, and as one well worthy of governing the kingdom. They represented, on the other hand, his rival Don Pedro, as a *freemason*; as one, who would subvert the religion of the country, and who, if he got possession of the crown, would call down, by his impiety, the curse of God and his saints upon their devoted heads.

A most curious and laughable circumstance, happened in the course of this contest at one of the Madonna churches, in Lisbon. There was worship-

ped in the aforesaid church an image of the Virgin, which was held in the greatest repute by the inhabitants, in consequence of the numerous miracles said to be performed by it in former times. The priests thought, that making this image speak in favour of their patron, Don Miguel, would be an irrefutable argument with the people for his pretensions. With this intention, a novena was ordered in honor of the image, and the church splendidly decorated for its celebration. The people assembled in crowds from all parts of the city, to pay their *devoirs* to the Virgin, and to hear the panegyric preached in her honour. The preacher, after enumerating the many benefits, temporal and spiritual, which the people derived from their devotion to the Queen of Heaven, and after relating the many miracles performed by the image, then and there worshipped; turning towards the image itself, and casting himself on his knees before it, (in which idolatrous act he was imitated by his audience,) he addressed to it a fervent prayer, for the good of the church, and implored it to manifest by a miracle, whether she was well pleased, that Don Miguel should reign over the kingdom of Portugal. The image, (*mirabile dictu!*) at the conclusion of this fervid appeal, bowed its head in sign of assent three times in succession, before the eyes of the assembled multitude, all of which, with one voice, simultaneously cried out "*a miracle, a miracle, long live Miguel I. the chosen of the Virgin, and the beloved of Heaven.*" This miracle was repeated frequently on the following days of the festival, and in presence of a still greater concourse, attracted by its fame, which spread in an incredibly short time, not only through Lisbon, but through the greater part of Portugal. It was even repeated by the Miguelite officers to their soldiers at the head of the

ranks, and had, as it was intended, the effect of exciting their zeal in the cause of the petty tyrant—as Miguel proved himself to be for the comparatively short time that he was in possession of the usurped throne.

The last day but one, however, of its acting was destined to open the eyes of the people, and to give them an idea of what priestcraft is capable, in order to arrive at its ends. At the close of the sermon, and when the preacher turned, as usual, to apostrophise the image, and to implore it to signify its pleasure, and assent to Miguel's government by moving the head, as it had done the seven preceding days, since the commencement of the *novena*, the image retained its inanimate position to the great disappointment of the people, whose expectations were so highly wound up, and to the consternation of the priests, who were privy to the cheat. The request was repeated with some additional flowers of rhetoric from the preacher and the most stunning vociferations from the people; but all in vain: the image neither moved its head; nor changed its position. At length, on the preacher's repeating the request the third time, and hinting, that the Virgin was angry on account of the presence of some free-masons, who mingled through curiosity among the crowd of worshippers; a voice was heard issuing from the inside of the image, and complainingly crying out, "It is not my fault, that the Virgin does not move her head for I have pulled the cord, till it broke; and what can I do more?" The voice was distinctly heard by every one; but the speaker was invisible. At last, one of those present, more courageous than the rest, attempted to approach the image, but was repulsed repeatedly by the priests, who well knew the consequence of the discovery; but being seconded by some others equally desirous of unravelling the mys-



tery he at length succeeded in coming close to it, and on removing the folds of the garments, with which such like images are decked out, he found an opening in the side, large enough for the admittance of a grown boy, whom he pulled out from the *viscera* of the Virgin, and who was immediately recognised as the nephew of the bishop, placed there by his uncle—for what purpose, it does not require an extraordinary degree of acuteness to guess. The whole secret was now explained, the people met the discovery with the ridicule it so well merited, and little was wanting, that they did not massacre, on the spot, the impostors, who got up the cheat. These thought it their best plan to consult for their own safety by flight, which they immediately made good through the doors of the sacristy, amid the hisses and curses of the infuriated populace. Miguel's cause lost many a good and powerful advocate by the failure of this imposture, and he was obliged to again have recourse to his usual remedies—the sword and dagger—to keep the inhabitants in any degree of subjection to his authority. The poor Madonna, or rather her image, was now disgraced for ever, and removed in a short time from the church altogether. Indeed it seems surprising, that the enraged populace did not tear it asunder, as the vile instrument of a wily priesthood for propagating their monstrous doctrines and extending the reign of darkness. It may, very probably, make its appearance again on the theatre of priestcraft, in the character of some miracle-working Madonna sent down from heaven, if not used for fire-wood, before a favourable opportunity presents of bringing it forward for that purpose; or it may be baptized with the name of some minor saintess, into which a new coat of paint could easily transform it; or in fine, it may be sold by the sacristan to some farmer, to be used by him for a Priapus

to frighten the birds from his newly-sown corn-fields. It is reasonable to suppose, that ninety-nine out of a hundred—yes, and the hundredth too—of popish miracles, if examined, as the foregoing has been, would be found nothing else than the machinations of the priests endeavouring to establish some favourite doctrine, or to bring about something, which may be profitable to themselves, as individuals, or to the whole church in general which they swear to support, *per fas et nefas*, to carry through thick and thin.

I have been thus diffuse on the subject of images and image-worship; because it is a doctrine fondly adhered to by the church of Rome, and cherished as one of its most essential and vital dogmas. The Scriptural dogmas, held in common by all, who take the revealed words as guide of their faith, is but of secondary consideration in the Romish church; some of them, as justification by faith, being exploded altogether, whilst those that are retained are so covered over with the filth of human inventions, that they may be said to be exploded too—at least practically. Of the latter class are the atonement of Christ, the influence of the divine spirit, the administration of the sacraments, and many other essential doctrines of which it is needless to make explicit mention in this place; all hidden under a monstrous mass of unscriptural leaven, which renders them of little, or no avail to the salvation of man. For these are substituted prayers to, and adoration of, saints, purgatory, adoration of relics, &c. I shall now proceed to examine another species of soul-killing idolatry—that of relics. It flows *sua sponte* from the invocation of saints and image-worship, and like these, is universally practised by the benighted followers of popery, and preached by its wily and error propagating ministers. It will be

seen by the following account of this superstition that it is carried to as great excess, as image-worship itself, whose daughter it is, and that like it, it is the source of no small emolument to the priests, who let no opportunities slip of inculcating it as a *most holy* and *wholesome doctrine*. Whether it be so, or not, I shall let the reader decide. It is enough for me to give an account of how it is actually practised.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

Relics—Practice of the primitive church—Relic-worship established by the pope—Manner of procuring saint-bodies—The three heads of John the Baptist—The offal of the charnel-houses made the object of a Christian's adoration—St. Crispin of Viterbo—St. Spiridione—Contest between the Greeks and Latins, for the possession of his body—Relic-worship at Malta—Maltese quack-doctor—Relics preserved in the church of St. John at Malta—Attempt to steal a relic—Anecdotes of the plague at Malta—Translation of a Saint's body from the catacombs at Rome to Malta—Stupendous miracle performed by touching the foregoing body—Reflections—Milk of the Virgin Mary—Shrine of Thomas a Becket at Canterbury—Henry VIII., and his myrmidons—Relation of the manner, in which the Virgin's milk found its way to the monastery of St. Mary's, near Falmouth—Concluding remarks on relic worship.

PAPISTS understand by *reliquiæ* or *relics*, the remains of the bodies, or clothes, or of any other thing belonging, or supposed to have belonged, to the saints and martyrs, worshipped as gods in their church. The instruments by which martyrs were put to death, the blood collected on that occasion, and even the very water in which their bodies were washed, are also numbered among the most esteem-

ed relics; and happy is he who can get possession—it matters little, how—of any of these holy things. These things are carried about in procession, preserved in gold and silver cases, kissed, bowed down to, and adored in many other idolatrous ways. The respect paid to the martyrs, and to the first teachers of the Christian faith, by the Christians of the first ages of the church, who were accustomed to assemble at their tombs, for the purpose of honouring their memories and for prayer, seems to have given rise to this superstition, and to have degenerated in subsequent ages, into the detestable system of relic-worship, which is now practised in the church of Rome. The primitive Christians, doubtless, had no other intention for assembling at the cemeteries of the martyrs, (where by the way—many, who were not martyrs, nor even pious Christians, were also buried) than for the purpose of prayer, and religious exercise, especially as such places were generally more retired, and as they could there enjoy communion with God, without being interrupted by their pagan persecutors. They had not even thought upon extending their veneration for the virtues of their departed brethren, farther than a simple regard for their memories, without expecting or desiring that any benefits, either temporal or spiritual, might follow to themselves from this pious commemoration of them. Their hopes of obtaining blessings were grounded upon a surer foundation—on the promises of Christ himself, who directed them to ask “the *Father in his name*;”—and in no other name. They were well aware, then, that the prayers and intercession of their departed friends, would avail them but little; and accordingly honoured their memories by imitating their lives, and not in worshipping their bones. Little did they imagine, however, that their

posterity would assume those simple usages as arguments in favour of idolatry—for, let papists say what they may, image-worship and relic-worship, virtually amounts to, and in fact, can be called by no other name: that, what was intended for a simple mark of respect for the memories of those, by whose perseverance and labours, the glad tidings of salvation reached themselves, should be made a precedent for partly destroying the effects to be expected from the more general knowledge of the gospel, and for dishonouring God, by robbing him of his glory, and bestowing it upon his creatures. Had they foreseen, that such conclusions would or could be drawn from their actions, it is very probable, nay, it is certain, that they would sooner have assembled for prayer in the idol-temples, and among pagans themselves, rather than afford an opportunity to posterity of misinterpreting their intention, by assembling at the cemeteries of martyrs.

After the establishment of image-worship and the invocation of saints in the church, it was very easy to make the addition of another species of idolatry, near akin to the former—I mean that of relic-worship. It was not deemed sufficient by the governors of the church, to worship the images of the saints, and to invoke their intercession, attributing to them the power of curing all diseases, of working miracles, and of obtaining eternal life for their worshippers, by pleading their own *merits* at the foot of the Almighty's throne: No, this was not sufficient to satisfy the thirst for gain, for which the popish clergy, secular and regular, were, and still are remarkable in every place, which has been, or is, cursed by their presence. They hit upon an expedient, by which a new trade was opened for them, a new market for the sale of their impositions. This was no other, than exciting a veneration for the



relics of those, to whom they themselves assigned a place in Heaven—for many, it may be supposed, prayed to, and honoured as saints, were not worthy of a place even in their own purgatory. As soon as this new article of Christianity began to be preached, the relic mania began. Jaw-bones, fingers, thumbs, teeth, pairings of the nails, the beard, and even the obscene parts of the bodies (e. g. the holy prepuce of Christ; which is actually worshipped at Rome,) of those, who were before honoured as saints, began to be sought after with the greatest diligence; happy was he, who could possess any part of such and invaluable things; for then he held himself secure from all assaults and devices of the devil, from pestilence, and contagion; from every thing in fine, which could endanger his temporal or spiritual interests. The priests, seeing how well their bait took, instituted prayers and fastings for imploring the direction of Heaven in finding the body of some martyr or other saint. The body was always found in some secret place, where it had before been conveyed by the priests, who then blasphemously gave out, that the prayers and fastings of the faithful had prevailed upon God to manifest the body of his saint, to increase their devotion, and afford a help for salvation to his people. The stinking carcass being conveyed processionally to the church, to be there deposited, under the altar or in some other sacred place; the earth, in which it was buried, acquired also a degree of sanctity by being honoured with its touch, and was accordingly either carried away by the priests, and afterwards sold at its weight of gold to their deluded followers, or else violently taken or stolen (for it became by right the priest's property,) by the mob assembled on the occasion. Many, when the catacombs of Rome, and other charnel-houses were exhausted, undertook long

and hazardous journeys to the eastern provinces of the Roman empire, in order to procure these safeguards against the evils of the world. The countries formerly honoured by the presence of Christ and his apostles, were more especially the places, where they hoped to be enriched with this new kind of treasure. The wily, artful Greeks, becoming aware of the delusions of the Latins, soon found them relics enough, and thereby enriched themselves by selling, as the bones and remains of Christian saints, the offals of their charnel-houses. Every thing, like a bone, or any thing, that could possibly appertain to the human body, was sold at extraordinary prices. Many bones, said to belong to the bodies of departed saints, were in reality the bones of pagans, and a great number were not even human. These, however, purchased at a great price, were borne in triumph to the western churches by their happy purchasers, and either retailed with profit to those who were rich enough and foolish enough to buy them, or bestowed, through devotion, on some church, which was not as yet in possession of such treasures: in either case, they were always held up as an object of devotion to the deluded people. In this way, the Latin churches come to the possession of the relics of St. Mark, St. James, St. Bartholomew, St. Cyprian, which they show to this day with so much ostentation. Some, who were too poor to purchase relics, but were yet unwilling to be without such inestimable remedies against all evils, did not scruple to break into the churches by night (for every thing is lawful, if successful, in a cause of this nature,) or into the houses of those in possession of relics, and rob them of the coveted treasures. The priests, in the mean time, did not neglect to turn to their own advantage, this infatuation of the people. They saw the success of their relic-stratagem,

and did not let the opportunity slip of enriching themselves. They were made the sole masters of the relics, and they caused a decree to be issued, that no relic should be worshipped, or believed genuine before it had passed through their hands, and had been stamped with their infallible authority. A shop for the sale of relics was established at Rome, by authority of the pope, which is open to this day, the pope having discovered relics to be a profitable commerce, and falling little short of indulgences themselves. In this shop were manufactured, or at least, *baptised* relics, to be afterwards sent to order, to all parts of the Christian world. From this shop, were sent forth the three heads of John the Baptist, which have divine honours paid to them in three of the principal Italian cities: Florence, Capua, and Reggio; each armed with the pontifical seal, and with a written paper, confirmatory of its genuineness.\*

\* I have had the honour myself, of kissing two of these heads; the one adored at Capua, and the one at Florence. I have been assured, by a Calabrian priest, that these two are spurious; and that the genuine one is adored, (*si adora*, were his words,) in his native city, Reggio. This he informed me under a strict injunction to secrecy. Would it be impious to doubt of the genuineness of all three? It would, the papist answers, because the pope has confirmed their genuineness with his infallible authority! What! of all three? Yes, of all three, for who can limit the power of the vicar of Christ. Such, in reality, was the question I once started to a brother monk, and one that was no fool neither, and such was the answer I received! I remember an anecdote of a French Abbé, of rather liberal principles, to whom were shown, whilst travelling in Italy, the three heads of the Precursor of the Lord. On seeing, at Reggio, the last head of the three, for he had already seen the other two at Florence and Capua, he laughingly remarked to the priest, who held it up to be kissed, that "his saintship, John Baptist, was really a philanthropical saint, for he converted his own head into three, in order to benefit, by its presence, the

Since relics, and relic-worship, became so much in vogue, and was found so profitable a cheat, it was thought expedient to issue a decree, dated from the *city of bulls*, and signed by the arch-cheat himself, by which it was ordained, that after one month from the date of it, in Italy, and after three months, in those countries situated on the other side of the Alps,\* no church should be consecrated for divine service, unless it possessed a holy carcass to be deposited under the great altar; and that churches already consecrated, and not having the requisite relic, should, within the same space, be provided with it, under pain of having their rites interdicted, and their clergy, or ministers, *ipso facto*, excommunicated. In the same bull, the faithful are admonished to provide themselves with the relics of the saints, which they may wear as amulets about their persons, or keep in their houses, as protection against the efforts of the devil, and against the accidents and misfortunes, which, more or less, attend every man during his pilgrimage through this world. This bull was manifestly designed to compel the faithful to purchase the bodies taken from the catacombs, and other cemeteries, in Rome, and dubbed by the pope's infallible authority, *the bodies* of martyrs, and *other saints*; and which were lying on hand in the pope's relic-shop, at Rome. It is but fair to add, that this custom of shutting up putrified

three different cities that were beatified with the possession of it." So much for French levity—but many Frenchmen are infidels. No wonder, when such monstrosities are proposed to their belief.

\* I don't remember the year in which this bull was promulgated, and not having by me a *bullary*, or *book of bulls*, I have not an opportunity of correcting the fault of my memory. I believe, however, that it was in some part of the tenth century, am not certain.

carcasses in the altars, and other parts of the Christian churches, can boast of a more ancient origin, for we find it ordained by a council held in Constantinople in the middle of the fourth century, that those altars should be demolished, under which there were found no relics; and St. Ambrose, bishop of Milan, refused to consecrate a church because it had no relics. This custom, however, soon died away, both because no virtue was ever attached to the relics themselves, even by the Christians of the fourth century, at which time the church began to fall off from Gospel purity, and because the zealous, scriptural Christians saw that it would be affording a bad precedent to future ages, and would induce the simple to attribute to bones, and other species of relics, a virtue which they did not, and, indeed, could not possess. It was, therefore, suffered to fall into disuse; nor was it again revived, till the establishment of image-worship, in the ninth century, brought it forward, as has been already related. The pope, and his priests, soon found the good effects to their pockets, proceeding from the promulgation of the relic-establishing bull, for the deluded people were compelled to buy up the carcasses at the owners' prices, or else have their churches shut up, or remaining unconsecrated, and their ministers excommunicated. The pope soon disposed of his stock of relics, and emptied the charnel-houses of their dirt; and all this with the greatest advantage to himself, and his priests, without mentioning how much it conduced to the purity of the air, thus freed from the pestilent exhalations of rotten bones. It must be admitted, however, that the greater number of the people swallowed the bait held out to them almost as willingly as their rulers extended it; but this is no argument in favour of its lawfulness, as this willingness to be duped on the part of the



people, is but the effect of the endeavours and preaching of the ministers of relic-worship; it always remaining to be accounted for, by what authority, or under what lawful pretext the offal of the charnel-house should be attempted to be made the object of a Christian's worship and devotion. Some of the learned men of the day, and no small number of the clergy, cried out loudly against the abuse, but these, being few in number, compared to the opposite party—the advocates for relics—were obliged, in a short time, to be silent, and bear with patience an evil they could not prevent: or if they persisted in opposing *the progress* of it, they incurred personal risk, and came under the *surveillance* of the papal court, which had the power of soon stopping their mouths with a vengeance.

The greater number of saint-bodies to be found under the altars of the different churches of Italy, and other popish countries, were taken from the catacombs at Rome. These were the common receptacles for the dead for many ages: it may then be supposed, that all who died during the earlier ages of the church, till the reign of Constantine, were not all Christians, and, consequently, *no saints*. But all being buried indiscriminately, according to the best authority, in this common burial-place, how then can relic-worshippers distinguish between the bodies of Christian martyrs and those of pagan malefactors. The difficulty is got over in the following manner. If the pope's relic-store should be exhausted by a great demand for holy-carcasses, it is again replenished from the catacombs. His Holiness appoints a day for a procession to these caverns, when, accompanied by all the secular and regular clergy of the *holy* city, he intends to make the selection of such bodies as may be wanted to supply the demands made by the faithful. The difficulty

of distinguishing between pagan and Christian bones, seems to be well known and acknowledged, for the "Veni Creator Spiritus," or the invocation of the Holy Ghost, is chanted by the assembled clergy, and a Latin prayer, (the Latin church never addresses the Deity in any other language,) is read, by which the Divine assistance, and directions from on high, is sought for the performance of this, (to them,) solemn duty. The pope then casts his eyes around the confused mass of mouldering skeletons, and, as the whim may take him, calls this the body of *saint* such-a-one, another, the body of "Virgin some-other-one—and so on, till he is warned by his attendants, that enough are now *baptised*, (*battezzati*, is the the name Romanists give to the bodies of the saints chosen in this manner,) to serve for the present occasion. The rotten bones are then carefully collected, and, having been sprinkled with holy water, are placed in a chest prepared for that purpose, and carried in procession to the Vatican, where there is a room purposely set apart for the preparation and sale of relics—the same that has been before called a "*relic-shop*." They are then handed over to some one, whose duty it is to arrange the bones anatomically, supplying those that are wanting with purified wax, and covering over what remains of the countenance, with a waxen mask made to life, so that it approaches very near the natural countenance, and would lead one to imagine that it is really the incorruptible flesh of the sanctified mummy.

The skilfulness to which they have reached, of making putrid bones assume the appearance of a human body, whence the soul is just departed, has given rise to the many lying fables related, concerning the incorruptibility of the bodies of favourite saints, so fondly believed by some sensible members of the popish communion. I have been more

than once deceived myself, while looking at made-up bodies of this kind, and firmly believed that the sanctity of the men whose bodies they were reported to be, had kept their flesh from the fate attending the bodies of all men without exception—pulverization and corruption: indeed it requires to touch the bodies themselves, from which visiters are restrained by the cases—some of silver, with a small opening of glass—others entirely of glass—to be able to detect the imposition.

There is worshipped in the church of the *Immaculate Conception*, at Rome, a body of this kind, which is enough to deceive the most acute, so well has it been got up, and made to imitate nature. It is called the body of the “blessed Crispin, of Viterbo,” a Capuchin lay-brother, whom monkish impudence chose to have enrolled in the number of the gods. He has been dead more than 150 years; yet his body, placed in a shrine built at an enormous expense for his worship, appears as if deprived of life but yesterday. On first seeing it, the monk who showed it assured me that it was the real incorruptible body of the saint whose name it bears, and that it would be a heresy to doubt its genuineness. The sight of the body itself obliged me to give credit to his false assertion, not indeed false, as far as he was concerned, because he only asserted what he conscientiously thought the truth:—the eyes, the mouth, the colour—even the beard, all and every thing so much resembling flesh and blood. So perfect is this imitation, and so forcibly is the imposition *eulogized* by the panegyrists of St. Crispin, that his shrine is daily surrounded by the devotees of Rome, each of whom brings his gift, either in money, or in wax-candles, in order to propitiate the intercession of his waxen saintship. A box is appended at the foot of the altar, with a hole in the middle, large enough

to admit a dollar; and from this box is supplied many a delicacy to the gormandizing monks. Festivals and triduos are held in honour of this mummy, by which the gains of the mummy-owners—the monks—are very much increased. It is needless to mention, that this body, so firmly believed by the people to be incorrupt, and also believed to be so by the greater part of the monks themselves, is nothing more than a few mouldering bones kept together by wax, and transformed by the same into a resemblance of the human frame. Alas! popery, how deceitful thou art!

At Corfu, one of the Ionian islands, there is also another lot of sanctified bones, christened “the body of St. Spiridione,” which are worshipped most idolatrously by the Greeks, as well as the Latins, of this island. The body, made up in the manner before described, is deposited in a massive chest of solid silver, which requires, on account of its great weight, the strength of four men to support it, when carried in procession, as it frequently is, through the streets of Corfu. Its shrine is in the Greek church, called after the saint, with whose putrid bones it is honoured, “Spiridione.” This body has been the apple of contention between the followers of the eastern and western churches of this island for many years. Very few knew who or what Spiridione was, yet all affirm that he was a great saint. It is equally unknown how his body found its way to the island, or what wind drove it there; for all confess that he was not a Corfuote. This mystery, in which the knowledge, or rather no *knowledge* of his country, and the acquisition of his body, is involved, far from lessening, has, on the contrary, tended to increase the people’s devotion for him. The Latins, taking advantage of the obscurity in which his history is involved, affirm that he was a bishop of their own church, and a

most zealous adherent of the pope's: they paint him, accordingly, with a mitre and crozier, and, under such a form, his picture is adored by them. The Greeks, on the other hand, assert, that he was the friend and companion of Photius, patriarch of Jerusalem, who, in the middle of the ninth century, caused the Greek church to separate from the Latin, on account of the errors of the latter; and that he was waylaid and murdered by emissaries from the pope, by whom he had *the honour* of being excommunicated. He is, therefore, placed by the Greeks in the number of their martyrs, and painted by them with blood issuing from a wound in his breast, which he is in the act of receiving from two grim-looking villains, dressed in the habit of Latin monks. The Latins, when Corfu was under Venetian dominion, having the force on their side, took the liberty of transporting Spiridione—case and all, which very probably the priests coveted more than the bones, as being of greater value—from the Greek church into their own cathedral, pleading in excuse for this act of violence, the sin of permitting a Roman Catholic saint to be worshipped in a schismatic church. This excited a rebellion, on the part of the Greeks, against the tyranny of the Venetians, which was not suppressed without the loss of many lives—sacrificed, no doubt, to appease the bones of the contested saint. Some thirty years after, a new governor being sent from Venice, he thought it would be a good way to gain popularity, and propitiate the affections of the Greeks, or, perhaps, —which is more likely—being bribed thereto by a good sum of money, (the Venetian governors of the Ionian islands were proverbially venal,) to use his influence with the Doge and senate to have Spiridione restored to his former owners. With much difficulty, and after surmounting the obstacles



placed in the way by the Latin side, he at length succeeded, and Spiridione changed masters again, or rather returned to his former ones, and was triumphantly replaced in his former shrine, poorer, however, by some thirty pounds of silver, which the Latins thought fit to subtract from the weight of his coffin—to make it more portable, to be sure, and in compassion to the miserable porters. The Greeks complained loudly of this robbery, but what could they do? A place for appeal was no where, for the very judges had share of the plunder! They were, therefore, obliged to bear up with the loss, and console themselves with the possession of their saint, and with the remainder of his riches; some of the Latins remarking, that thirty pounds was the least he could give the Latin church in payment for his entertainment and lodging there for more than thirty years. Spiridione remains in possession of the Greeks down to the present time, nor is there any likelihood of their again losing him, till, guided by the Spirit of Truth, and by His precious Word, they throw aside, of their own accord, his degrading worship, and convert his silver case into something of real service to their island, leaving his body to return to the dust from which it was created, if, indeed, the bones that are shown as his ever formed the part of a human body; a thing, in itself, a matter of doubt. The worship of Spiridione, as now practised at Corfu, is idolatrous in the extreme—perhaps Vincenzo Ferreri is not more idolatrously worshipped at Valentia, nor St. Peter at Rome, than he is in that island; for certainly the superstitious and idolatrous rites practised at his shrine can hardly be surpassed. It is remarkable, and at the same time surprising, how England allows her policy to get the better of her religion. The British soldiers quartered in this island have positive or-

ders from their general to present arms to the bones and images of this saint, as they are carried along in procession through the streets; the bones by the Greeks, and images and pictures by the Latins. Nor is this all: a guard of honour, commanded by a commissioned officer, is always in attendance on every solemn occasion, and drawn up in front of the church, to do honour to the relics of this idol: thus is a British soldier obliged to sacrifice his duty to God to his duty as a soldier. This may be good policy, but very bad religion, and serves to confirm the other continental nations in their ideas of English religion; for it is no uncommon thing for an Italian, when he wishes to express his opinion of the want of religion in one of his acquaintances, to exclaim "*Quello ha di religione quanto un Inglese:*"—*He has as much religion as an Englishman*; meaning to say, he has none at all.

Malta, another, and, indeed, the chief British colony in the Mediterranean, is also remarkable in the annals of superstition for its servile adherence to the doctrines of popery, which are there practised upon in full vigour, and under the most disgusting forms. This island is supposed to have been converted to the Christian faith by St. Paul, who was shipwrecked on a part of it, known at this day by the name of "*Porto di San Paulo*" Whether this be true or not, that is whether the Melita on which St. Paul was cast ashore after the shipwreck, as related in the Acts, corresponds, with the modern Malta;—and some doubt it, and give their reasons for doubting it from the description of Paul himself, as given in the Acts—it is certain, that St. Paul never taught the Maltese the farrago of superstition, which later ages have substituted in their island for pure Christianity. Indeed, were he to be cast ashore again on this island in the present century, as he is reported

to have been in the first; he could with as much justice, style the inhabitants "*barbarians*" (the name by which he has designated them in his account of the shipwreck) at this very time, and in the modern signification of the word too, as he had before done in its relative sense—because they were not Romans, nor Roman colonists. Popery has done her work in this island, as is manifest in the ignorance of the inhabitants, not one out of a hundred of which can read, and has succeeded to her heart's content in brutalizing a people naturally of a ready wit, and superior capacity for the arts and sciences. Instead, however, of this island's producing artists and scholars, which it certainly would, were it not cursed by the degrading yoke of popery, it now produces nothing else than pick-pockets and cut throats, quacks and priests, who, unable to find a subsistence in their own island, scatter themselves through the Levant, and bear with them the vices, which they learned at home under the fostering care of priestcraft. The Turks and other inhabitants of the Levant are so convinced of the evil disposition of the ill-taught Maltese, that they call all roguish foreigners by that name; for Maltese, in their language, is as much as to say, perfidious, roguish and blood-thirsty. On this account every gentlemanly Maltese is obliged to deny his country, when he travels in the Levant; or else he is liable to be suspected of having the same *virtuous* dispositions, for which his countrymen have rendered themselves so famous or rather *infamous*.\*

\* A Maltese quack-doctor of the name of Caruana was confined in the consular prison at Damascus for nearly three months, until the Consul could receive advice from the government of Malta of the manner in which he ought to be punished for his crimes. Having obtained by an affected knowledge of physic, a footing in some Turkish villages, four or five days journey distant from Damascus, and the plague having broke out there during that time, he, in order to increase his gains was discovered throwing by night

If St. Paul were to land on their island now-a-days, he would find greater difficulty in turning them away from the infamous lives, which they lead through the demoralizing influence of popery, and of converting them from their Christianized idolatry, than he formerly had in converting them from Paganism to Christianity.—But to return from this digression.

Relic-worship is carried on in this island to a monstrous excess. The knights of St. John of Jerusalem, after their expulsion from Rhodes, transferred the head quarters of their half-religious, half-military order to this barren rock, and with it, brought also all the most revolting superstitions of popery. Relic-worship was not the least of these; for all the churches built by them, after having been confirmed in the possession of the island, are well

the infected clothes of those that died, into the houses of the other inhabitants. The ruffian, not content with the number he killed by his ignorance of medicine in which he pretended to be skilled, felt no scruple in infecting the other inhabitants; because he expected to be called to their assistance, and fill his pockets accordingly. He was caught in the act, and little was wanted, that he was not torn asunder by the enraged Turks. There were found about his person, when taken, various valuables pilfered from houses of the rich inhabitants, by whom he was consulted as a physician, and most of whom died under his hands. The Turkish government, not having the power of punishing him, as living under British protection, had him escorted to the British consulate, and loudly cried out for his instant execution; for had he been a Turk, he would not be allowed to live two hours after his conviction. This same fellow was nephew to the present bishop of Malta. This may serve as an example of Maltese roguery, and is only one out of many equally criminal, whilst I could give. But their religion and the manner they are taught by their soul-killing priests are in fault, not themselves. The same fellow would find absolution for the murders he had committed from Monsignor his uncle, upon his return to Malta.

supplied with a plenteous stock of such trumpery. The body of St.—(I don't remember his name, but it is of little importance—) who is said to have been consecrated bishop of the island by St. Paul is here worshipped by the stupid Maltese with the same ardour, and the same unseemly rites that Spiridione is worshipped at Corfu.

The principal church of Valletta, the capital of the island, is dedicated to St. John the Baptist. It may be supposed, that a people so fond of idolatry, and more especially of that branch of it called "relic-worship," would not want for some relic belonging to this their favourite saint: the supposition is perfectly just, for they glory in the possession of no less than three. They ostentatiously show the identical sword with which John was beheaded by order of Herod; three of his teeth extracted by the executioner after performing his office; and a part of the camel-skin (to me it appeared a piece of the untanned skin of a Maltese ass, a very fine race of which are bred on the island) with which he was clothed. These relics were purchased at an extraordinary price from the pope's relic shop at Rome by the Knights, who spared no expense in providing whatever might be deemed necessary for exciting the public devotion, on which, more than on the force of their arms, they relied for the favour of the public.

A dish, said to be the one in which the head of John was presented to Herodias, is preserved as a relic in Teramo, a town in the Kingdom of Naples. The legend attached to this relic relates, that an immense sum of money was offered for it by the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem in order to transfer it to their church at Malta; but the people and clergy of the former city refused to deliver up for love or money so valuable a treasure; "for they well knew," sensibly continues the Legendist, "that the



safety and protection of their city depended upon the safe keeping of it." The Knights, finding that they could not have it for money, sent four chosen men from Malta, who were instructed to break into the church by night and carry off the treasure; being promised, if they succeeded, a great reward. They were taken in the act of breaking open the iron-box, in which, for greater security, it was kept, and being carried before the magistrates, they confessed the whole plot, and threw all the blame upon the devotion, that the Knights of Malta had to any thing belonging to their holy patron. This story if true, may be a guide for judging of the estimation in which the three relics they already possessed were held by the Knights of St. John, and of the immense sum they must have given the pope for them, whereas they offered so much money, and went to so much trouble to obtain one of less consequence, as the holy charger certainly is, when compared with the *three teeth of St. John*, not to mention the sword and a piece of his holy camel-skin.

A great many miracles, noted down as they occurred in a book kept for that purpose, are attributed to these fictitious relics, which are supposed by the superstitious Maltese to be the island's safe-guard against pestilence and famine, to each of which it is very much exposed; to the latter, on account of its dense population, and its natural sterility, by which it is rendered incapable of supplying the inhabitants with corn sufficient for the consumption of two months out of twelve; to the former, by reason of its great commerce with Turkey, and Barbary—places never free from the plague. More reliance, indeed, is placed on these worthless relics, than on the protection of God, and on the strict quarantine regulations, by which vessels coming from suspected countries are subject to long quarantines, some of forty,

some of fifty, and some of sixty days, whilst others in a harbour called *Marsamucetto*, set apart entirely for that purpose, are reprovisioned, and sent back again to sea, without being allowed to land at all; or than on the prudence and foresight of the English Governor, whose duty it is to provide a supply of corn sufficient for two years, in case of a blockade, which corn is preserved in pits or fosses made for that purpose under ground in some of the principal streets of the cities, and in the garrisons. When these precautions keep the island free from the dreaded evils, the Maltese do not attribute their preservation to the measures taken to insure it, but rather to the protection of St. John and his relics; or of some other saint.

I have been informed by one of the first English residents on the island, who came to it soon after it was evacuated by the French—his name was McKenzie, a Scotchman, since dead—that, during the pestilence which raged there with great fury in 1817, and carried off a great number of the inhabitants, these relics and the dependence placed in them by the superstitious populace, was the cause of death to many, who would otherwise have escaped from its destroying influence. The reason he assigned for this opinion was; “because the prudential care of not coming in contact with one another, (for the disease was transmitted by the touch) was entirely neglected by the people, who assembled in crowds to pray before and touch the relics, which were exposed for public worship in the church of St. John.” Some, who were already infected with the raging malady, believed that they would be cured by touching them; whilst others, still in health, believed, that the touch of such holy miraculous things would preserve them from all infection. The crowd assembled on these occasions was immense, and filled

the church quite full, by which the infected and the healthy were all jumbled together; and therefore obliged to come in contact with the clothes and persons of each other. He further added, "that the touch of the relics themselves was attended with infection and afterwards death; for very few, who were once infected, ever recovered. The relics being touched by the infected, conveyed the fatal malady to those in health, who touched them afterward, under the belief, that they had the power of protecting them from that evil, which perhaps they would have escaped, had it not been for their own superstitious confidence. The church was shut up by order of government before the cessation of the pestilence, it being found by experience, that more of those died, who were in the habit of frequenting it, than any other class of people—a striking example of the efficacy of relics.

The church of St. John, besides the forementioned relics, for which and some other things of little real value it is held in so great repute by the Maltese, is in itself a truly beautiful building, and possesses many monuments of the arts, worthy of a better fate than to be made the ornaments of a place set apart for the profanation of Christianity; for certainly the superstitious rites and ceremonies practised under its roof cannot justly be called by any other name. It possesses many fine paintings of celebrated masters, procured at an enormous expense by the Knights, who spared neither money nor labour in decorating this, their favourite church. The marble monuments erected to the memory of the Grand Masters of the Hierosolymitan order are worthy of a place in the Vatican, itself, on account of the beauty of execution, and richness of design: they might, indeed, have afforded subjects for study to the great Canova himself, for they are, in the opinion of

competent judges, master-pieces of sculpture. Besides the cathedral of St. Giovanni, there are other churches in this island, which would be thought splendid, nay, magnificent, if situated in another place, where they might not be outshone, and their beauty undervalued by a too close comparison with the former. All, however, are equally profaned by the idolatrous rites of popery; and are more esteemed by the inhabitants for possessing some miracle-working image, or relic, than for the beauty of architecture, or for being sacred to the worship of the Supreme Being.

During my late visit to Malta, in the year 1834, an occurrence took place there, which, for its absurdity, would lead one to imagine, that the reign of Vandalic ignorance had again returned; and which fully proves that popery is the same in the nineteenth that it was the middle ages—indeed its boast of immutability is, lamentably, but too true, for it preaches and practises the same doctrines, and the same ceremonies in these our own times, that it has done in former times, in which its monstrous errors gained ground on account of the general ignorance, which then reigned. The occurrence to which I allude, is no other than the translation of a saint's body sent from the catacombs at Rome into one of the principal churches of the Città Vittoriosa, a town opposite Valletta, and divided from the latter by an arm of the sea, which forms the principal harbour of the island. The rotten bones of which this body was composed, were purchased at the request of the inhabitants, who collected by subscription the necessary funds, for the purpose of enriching by their presence a church long since dedicated to the saint, in whose name they were baptized; and which before this was honoured by the possession of only minor-relics of this saint, e. g.—the pairings of his nails, or a drop of the

water, in which his feet were washed; or something else of this kind. From Valletta, where it was first landed, packed up like a bale of merchandize, and marked "Corpo Santo. Alla cura del Reverendissimo Monsig. Caruana, Arcives. di Rhoda, e Vescovo di Malta" ("A holy body. Care of the most Rev. Caruana, Archbishop of Rhodes and Bishop of Malta,") it was carried in procession by land, a distance of three miles, whereas the passage by water could be accomplished in five minutes, to the church, for which it was destined, accompanied by all the clergy, secular and regular of the island, with lighted torches, and psalters in their hands, and attended by an immense concourse of people of all grades and conditions. Upon the procession's arriving at the church, the sanctified bones were deposited amidst the firing of pistols and acclamations of the multitude, on the great altar, and on the very spot of the same altar set apart for the exposition of the sacrament, or wafer, which, as they believe, contains within its narrow precincts the God of Christianity; and there set up during three successive days to the adoration of the stupid multitude. If this be not idolatry, barefaced idolatry too, I know not what idolatry is! Many miracles were said to have been performed during these three days by touching this worthless relic: many, who were bed-ridden for a number of years before, were said to have got the use of their limbs; some obtained sight, others were *freed* from sickness; and all attributed their restoration to the power of this deified filth.

One miracle, that made more noise than all the rest, being *unique* in its kind, is worthy of especial notice. A woman, the wife of one of the wealthiest men in the Island, found herself without children, though married for a number of years—more than twenty. She was now fast approaching to that time



of life, in which all hope of offspring is generally abandoned. This was the cause of no small uneasiness to herself and her husband, who lamented the necessity of leaving their property to distant relations; on account of having no children of their own. Physicians and their prescriptions were of no avail, though constantly consulted, and attended to by one and the other. Finding that they were nothing the better of the means employed for obtaining posterity, though they neglected nothing, which had the appearance of being useful, they at length turned to implore help from on high, and spent much money in paying for masses, to be celebrated according to their intention. On the arrival of the forementioned holy relic, the wife, at the instigation of her confessor presented some twenty pounds of wax-candles to be burned before it, and was, during the whole triduo, in constant attendance at the church, wherein it was kept, employed in prayer before it. About two months afterward, she had the satisfaction of being able to console her husband with the certainty she had of becoming a mother before long. Nor was she deceived, for it became shortly after manifest, that she was really and truly pregnant. She continued her devotion to the holy relic, and made no scruple to publish to the world the favour she obtained through the intercession of the saint, and by the touch of his holy body. She presented another weight of candles, and spent no small sum in getting masses celebrated at the shrine of the saint, of which her confessor was guardian and high-priest. This splendid miracle, for such it was universally acknowledged, increased, if possible, the devotion of the people towards the blessed relic, and caused it to be held in greatest veneration by all—especially by barren women. Whether the woman, in favour of

whom it was performed, was safely delivered, and had the happiness of presenting her husband with a son and heir, or otherwise, I cannot tell, for I left the Island long before such an event could happen, according to the ordinary course of nature. This only I can affirm, that it was confidently expected by her friends and relations, whom I well knew, that the child with which she was *enceinte*, would be something extraordinary, and would make itself conspicuous in some way, either in church or state—or perhaps in both; for it was one evidently bestowed by Heaven to the prayers and tears of a devout Christian, for such the woman was esteemed, and such she was, if a superstitious reliance on the tenets and doctrines of popery—on saint-worship, and relic-worship—can make one.

The reader may form his own judgment on the foregoing miracle. He may believe it, or not believe it, just as he thinks the circumstances require. I have related it, as it has been related to me, and have deviated very little from the words of the narrator, who was one of my intimate friends, and a worthy man, though unfortunately a Maltese priest, and a firm believer in such absurdities. I shall only remark, that the confessor, by whose advice the lady supplicated the assistance of the relic in her distress, was well known for his gallantries among his penitents, and had been suspended for a long time from his clerical duties by his bishop, not so much for living in *incontinency*, as for *living so*, openly; for, indeed, bishop Caruana himself, unless very much belied, was not over-chaste in early life, and could charitably excuse the failings of human nature. He is now, however, an old man, and seems, by his sanctified deportment, to have forgotten the follies of youth, and to be making reparation, if he had ever transgressed his vow of chastity. Some free-thinkers

of Malta had the hardihood to say, that the confessor took the husband's place in relation to the lady, and that he had a greater share in performing the miracle, than the holy relic. But this may be calumny invented by those free-thinkers, in order to lessen the child-giving power of the relic. Let the reader judge: I have stated the *pro* and *con*, but hazard no opinion.

There is preserved in the different churches of Italy, and other popish countries, so great an abundance of the *milk* of the *Virgin* Mary, which is adored, and worshipped as the most valuable relics, that it would seem impossible, that one woman could produce so much during her whole life, though she were milked daily, like a cow, and though her infant, for whose sustenance it had been given by nature, had never tasted the smallest drop of it. Yet these portions of what is called the Madonna's milk, and which if brought together would form a mountain of cheese, sufficient to supply a cheese-eating Welsh family for a whole winter, are said to have flowed directly from the breasts of the Virgin Mary, and to have been bestowed by herself to her favourites in token of her protection, and of her continual watching over them.

It would be needless and quite uninteresting to the reader to relate the ridiculous fables, which are related concerning the benefits, temporal and spiritual, which had been granted to those, who devoutly knelt down before and kissed these relics: be it sufficient to observe, that they are on a par in absurdity with the other lying wonders, by which the church of Rome have catered for the applause of her followers, and deluded the numerous victims of her superstitious practices. England, now happily free from Romish bondage, had also herself more than her share of this kind of trumpery before the re-

formation. Besides the shrine of Thomas à Becket, which was noted for its immense riches, and for being the Mecca, not only of England, but of surrounding and far distant nations, it was also remarkable, according to the testimony of Erasmus, for a rich and splendid shrine of the Madonna, placed at a village called at that time *St. Mary's*, near Falmouth, and only three miles from the sea-coast. This, as well as the shrine of Thomas à Becket, and the other rich monasteries fell into the hands, on the suppression of the monastic houses, of the wife-killing Henry, (as Cobbett calls him,) and of his no less rapacious and impious courtiers—the same, as if the hand of God was upon the wealth amassed through superstition and false religion, and that he wished to show his indignation at the manner, in which such riches were collected by allowing it to serve for the gratification of the avarice and other evil propensities of this royal monster, and his demoniacal ministers—for such they were, with very few exceptions.

Among the things of wonder, and devotion, which attracted numerous pilgrims to this temple of the Madonna, near Falmouth, *about which we are speaking*, was a relic of the Virgin's milk renowned for miracles and prodigies. This famous relic brought in no small gains from the numerous visitors, to the nest of idle monks, who were owners of it; indeed, its church almost rivalled Becket's shrine itself in riches, and in the number of the gold and silver articles, and in the jewels and precious stones of immense value, which it possessed. The story of the manner in which this *sacred treasure* was obtained is thus related by Erasmus.

A certain pious gentleman of the good old times, of the name of Gulielmus (William) and a Frenchman by birth, rendered himself conspicuous to the

age in which he lived, for his zeal in seeking out the relics of the saints, and holding them forth to the devotion of his fellow-christians. Having wandered through a greater part of the globe, and especially the regions of the East, in search of those helps to salvation, he arrived at last in Constantinople, where his brother held the office of bishop. Having enjoyed in that city the society of his brother for a long time, he was on the point of returning to France, without having made any addition to his stock of relics, when he was surprised with the joyful news of a holy virgin of Constantinople, having in her possession a portion of the Virgin Mary's milk. He now esteemed all his labours at nothing; all his other relics, collected with so much trouble and expense, of little consequence, unless he obtained some portion of this sacred milk to add to their heap: he thought this one relic of more value, than all his other relics put together. At last, partly by entreaty, partly by threats, and partly by a large weight of gold, he obtained a portion of it, and was beatified with the possession of this esteemed, and so eagerly desired treasure. He now, in his own estimation, richer than Cræsus, hastens home with the intention of depositing the fruit of his labours in the cathedral of Paris, his native city, to be there preserved as a safe-guard for future ages, and an object of devotion to posterity; but, alas! nothing is constantly, or for a long time, prosperous in this world! the poor man died before he had performed half his journey. When he found his end approaching, he called to him another Frenchman, one of the companions of his pilgrimage, and deposited in his hands the sacred treasures, and among the rest the Virgin's milk; conjuring him by his friendship, and by the respect due to the memory of a faithful companion, to carry it to the place he had



intended, if his life had been spared, that is, to deposit it in the cathedral of Paris: and on the altar dedicated to the Virgin in said church. To make a long story short, as story-tellers say, the latter died also before his arrival in Paris, and at his death, was obliged to confide the treasure to the care of an Englishman, another of his companions; but with many entreaties, he made him promise to do with it, what it was his own intention to have done. The Englishman lived to arrive at Paris, and deposited—(mindful of the entreaties of his dead companion, and of his own promise to him)—the holy milk on the Virgin's altar in presence of the Canons, who bestowed him half of it in reward of his integrity, and in payment of his trouble. This half, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he carried to the church of the Canons regular near Falmouth, where it was preserved till the reformation. What became of it after that period, history is silent; though it is very probable, that when the monks were obliged to change quarters at the suppression of the monasteries, it was borne by them to some country, where it would meet with more devout worshippers than it could possibly expect among the half-frantic population of England at that period. Erasmus adds, that lest there could arise any doubt of the genuineness of the relic, there were affixed to the tablet, on which the foregoing history was related, the names, signed by their own hands, of the different ecclesiastical superiors in England, and especially of those belonging to the monastery of the church in which it was preserved. An indulgence also of forty days was granted to all the faithful, who devoutly visit it, and bestow a *small* gift for defraying the expenses attending its due keeping, that is, for candles, oil, &c. to be kept burning before it. By these *small* gifts, however, it arrived, or rather the monks

arrived at the possession of the immense treasures—the accumulation of ages—for which the church was distinguished—more indeed than for the piety of those to whom it belonged.

It would be needless to proceed farther with the inquiry concerning relics and relic-worship. What has been already said, will be sufficient to show to the reader the manner in which this idolatrous practice is upheld, and the barefaced disregard for truth, or even probability, for which its advocates distinguish themselves. I shall, therefore, pass over in silence the numerous pieces of the true cross; the clothes in which the infant Jesus was wrapped, when born; the staff of St. Joseph; the holy prepuce; what distinguished the gender of Balaam's ass; the nails which pierced the hands of our Saviour; the crown of thorns; the chains with which St. Peter was bound; in fine, all the other objects of superstition, by which the Christian is turned away from the worship of God, and from trusting his salvation to the atonement of Christ, in order to place it upon the inventions of priests, whose love of gain excites them to substitute any thing, and show any way, rather than that pointed out for man's salvation in the divinely inspired volume.

## CHAPTER XXV.

Indulgences—When first granted—Leo X, publishes Indulgences—Form of Indulgences—Language of Indulgence-mountebanks—Extract from the “Tax of the Sacred Roman Chancery.”—Dispute between the Augustinians and Dominicans—Luther, and the Reformation—Galileo Galilei—Decline of Indulgences in Italy—The Pope grants Indulgences—gratis, because he could find no Purchasers—The Cruzada—Spaniards obliged, by the Secular Arm, to purchase Indulgences—Probable income of the Pope from the sale of Indulgences in Spain—Bishops endowed with the power of granting and selling Indulgences—Obliged to pay an annual rent to the Pope—A Bishop suspended from his functions, and confined to a Convent, by reason of not being able to pay the Pope’s rent.

THE doctrine of indulgences is another of those money-making impositions, by which the church of Rome maintains her sway over the consciences of Christians, and entices them by the false doctrine of the vicarious merits of saints, to trust their salvation rather to these, than to the all-sufficient atonement of Christ. *Indulgences* may be defined “*a remission of punishment due to sin, obtained by paying a certain sum of money, by which the superfluous good works of the saints, that is, those which were over and above the quantity required for their own salvation, are purchased from the church.*” These good works may be applied by the person purchasing them, either to his own private use, in remission of the punishment due to his own sins, or they may be applied in suffrage of the souls of his friends, suffering in the *not very agreeable* region of purgatory.

This curious, though money-making doctrine,

seems to have derived its origin from the unscriptural doctrine of salvation by *works*. According to the doctrine of the Romish church, all the good works of the saints, which were over and above those required for their own salvation, are deposited, together with the merits of Christ, in one immense heap, and that the church, i. e. the pope, has the power of using this treasure, and of opening it to those who are willing to purchase a part of it for their own souls, or the souls of their departed relatives.

The invention of indulgences seems to have taken place in the 11th century, under the pontificate of Urban II, who granted them in recompense to those who went in person upon the enterprise of conquering the Holy Land: they were afterwards bestowed upon those who hired a soldier for that purpose, and in process of time, they were given to those who contributed money to any purpose which the pope may have at heart to accomplish. No invention of the Romish church, perhaps not that of relics itself, has been more openly abused, and made the source of more unhallowed gain, than this one of indulgences. Leo the Tenth, in order to carry on the magnificent structure of St. Peter's, published indulgences, and a plenary remission of sins to all who would in any wise contribute money towards it. Finding the scheme to turn out well, he granted to Albert, elector of Mentz, and archbishop of Magdeburg, the benefits of the indulgences of Saxony and the neighbouring parts, and farmed out those of other countries to the highest bidders. These, to make the most of their contract, procured the ablest preachers to cry up the value of the ware. The form of the indulgences was as follows: Dominus noster, Jesus Christus misereatur tui, et te absolvat per merita suæ sanctissimæ passionis. Et

ego, ex auctoritate illius, et sanctorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli, et Domini nostri sanctissimi, papæ mihi concessâ, et commissâ pro his partibus, absolvo te ab omnibus censuris ecclesiasticis, quocunque modo *incur sis*,\* et ab omnibus delictis, et peccatis, etiam ab his reservatis ad peculiarem sanctæ sedis cognitionem; tibi remitto omnem pœnam, quam in purgatorio pati debes propter hæc, et te restituo ad participationem sacramentorum sanctæ ecclesiæ, ad unitatem fidelium, et ad eam innocentiam, et puritatem quam in baptismo possedisti: sic quum morieris, portæ inferni claudantur, et paradisi portæ aperiantur, et si statim non decesseris, in plena vi gratia hæc tibi remaneat usque ad mortis articulum. In nomine Patris et Filii, et Spiritus sancti. Amen. May our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon thee, and absolve thee by the merits of his most holy passion. And I, by his authority, and that of the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul, and of our most holy lord, the pope, absolve thee from all ecclesiastical censures, in whatever manner incurred, and from all thy sins and transgressions; even from such as are reserved for the cognizance of the holy see. I remit all punishment which thou deservest in purgatory on their account, and I restore thee to the holy sacraments of the church, to the unity of the faithful, and to that innocence and purity which thou didst possess at baptism, so that when thou diest, the gates of hell shall be shut, and the gates of paradise shall be opened; and if thou diest not at present, this grace shall remain in full force when thou art at the point of death. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

\* The reader ought to bear in mind, that the pope has also the privilege of making new Latin words. The above barbarism ("*incur sis*,") is a specimen of his infallibility in grammar. *Purgatorium* is another popish, and *infallible* barbarism.



In a book called "the Tax of the Sacred Roman Chancery," in which are contained the exact sums to be paid, in order to obtain pardon for each particular sin, the following curious items of some of the fees are to be found:

For procuring abortion, - - - - \$1 90

For simony, - - - - - 2 60

For sacrilege, - - - - - 2 60

For taking a false oath, in criminal cases, 2 25

For burning a neighbour's house, - 3 00

For defiling a virgin, - - - - 2 25

For lying with a mother, sister, &c. 1 90

For murdering a layman, - - - - 1 90

For keeping a concubine, - - - - 2 60

For laying violent hands on a clergyman, 2 60\*

The terms in which the retailers of indulgences cried up their efficacy, and the manner in which they enforced the necessity of purchasing them, on their benighted audiences, would, were it not tampering with immortal souls, and plunging them headlong into the soul-destroying gulf of false reliance, be rather a subject for ridicule than for serious comment. The mode practised in Germany at the era of the reformation by Tetzels, the Dominican indulgence-monger, and his worthy coadjutors, would be sufficient to excite the spleen of even the most ignorantly attached to popish superstitions, and therefore there is no wonder, that a Luther rose up against them; one who, as his after-career made manifest, was possessed of superior talents buried in the mire of monkish ignorance and slavery; and who perhaps only

\* This curious book was published in Oxford at the time of the reformation in England. It is now very scarce, all the copies being bought up by the emissaries of popery, in order to do away with the evidences of the iniquity of their church. There is a copy, however, preserved in the Bodleian library, at Oxford, whence Smith has extracted the above to insert in his book, called "*the Errors of the church of Rome.*"

waited for the favourable moment to free Christianity from the monstrous absurdities, with which she was weighed down at that period, and with which she is still weighed down in whatever place she appears in the meretricious garb of popery. Robertson in his history of Charles V. gives the following specimen of pulpit eloquence, employed for the purpose of disposing of this new kind of merchandize in the sixteenth century: "If any man" (preached the indulgence mountebanks) "purchase letters of indulgence, his soul may rest secure with respect to its salvation. The souls confined in purgatory, for whose redemption indulgences are purchased, as soon as the money *tinkles* in the chest, instantly escape from that place of torment, and ascend into heaven. That the efficacy of indulgences was so great that the most heinous sins, even if one should violate the *Mother of God*, would be remitted, and expiated by them, and the person be freed both from punishment and guilt. That this was the unspeakable gift of God in order to reconcile man to himself. That the cross erected by the preachers of indulgences was equally efficacious with the cross of Christ itself. Lo! the heavens are open, if you enter not now, when will you enter? For twelve pence, you may redeem the soul of your father out of purgatory, and are you so ungrateful, that you will not rescue the soul of your parent from torment? If you had but one coat, you ought to strip yourself instantly and sell it in order to purchase such benefits."

By such impious harangues as this were Christians led astray from the only sure way of obtaining salvation, by placing their hopes and confidence on the atonement of Christ; and directed to place them upon the absurd and ridiculous substitutes invented by their self-interested and greedy teachers for their own private emoluments.

The state of the popish clergy in the sixteenth

century must have been wholly abandoned, and lost to every sense of religion, when such impieties were not resisted, or contradicted only through the jealousy that one order entertained for another—through the jealousy of the Augustinians against the Dominicans. It is evident, that the Augustinian General did not excite his subjects to preach against the Dominican blasphemous abuse of indulgences (if indeed *abuse* can be applied to things, which never had any proper effectual use) for any better reason than a hatred of the latter order, and the envy with which his mind was filled, at seeing the immense sums flowing into its coffers from the sale of indulgences; and by no means, because he compassionated the many immortal souls, which were unawares dragged into perdition by trusting their salvation to the efficacy imputed to such trumpery by its lying and anti-Christian venders. This enmity against the Dominicans was likewise increased by a sense of wrong, that he considered committed against his own order, for the Augustinians had heretofore the honor of being the pope's agents in Germany, when his Holiness invented anything new to replenish his exhausted treasury at the expense of the eternal happiness of his deluded followers. This agency was, on the publication of indulgences by Leo X., withdrawn from them and granted to the Dominicans by the Archbishop of Magdeburg; by which were sown the seeds of dissension between these two powerful orders. Little did Monsignor—the Bishop, imagine that this preference shown for the Dominicans would be the moving cause of that memorable revolution, which, in the end, dissipated the clouds of error, with which the pure atmosphere of genuine Christianity was for so many ages covered over, and by which it was rendered pestilential. Luther rose up at the command of his General, and began to preach, first against the abuses of indulgences, and then,

against indulgences themselves. The latter part of his mission was not contained in his letters of instruction, and therefore he incurred the displeasure of his employer, the General of his order, who, however, he might be excited by envy to endeavour to supplant the Dominicans in the monopoly of indulgences, had not the least wish of undeceiving the people, who were victims to the imposition. Indeed, had he succeeded in transferring the sale of them from the Dominicans to his own order, the people would be nothing the gainers by the change: "*Quicquid peccant reges, plectuntur Achivi*"—which translated into modern language would mean "*whoever dances we must pay the piper*"—could very properly be taken as their motto; for whichever of the rival orders would gain the ascendancy, and become sales-masters of his Holiness' wares, the wares were always the same, and suffered no diminution in their intrinsic value, or rather *no value*, their pernicious qualities being the same, when sold either by a Dominican, or an Augustinian.

Luther was ordered to retract what he had preached against indulgences; but he had gone already too far for an honorable retraction: he therefore boldly threw off the cloak under which he had hitherto concealed his real opinions; being unquestionably an instrument in the hands of God, who compassionating in his own good time the forlorn and fallen state of his Church deigned to *choose* by one of those wonderful and unsearchable ways of his infinite wisdom, from the very propagators of the errors, with which she was polluted, a person to dispel those errors and make vanish before the face of truth the flimsy support by which they were upheld, and by which they were impiously palmed upon his people as the way in which he loved to be worshipped. All things considered, if any one human event was ever brought

about by the direct agency of the Holy Spirit, the reformation seems to *be that one*. In whatever light this glorious event be viewed; whether as the means by which the human mind was freed from the bondage, in which it was held during past ages, and which hindered a Galileo\* from exercising his natural vi-

\* The treatment, which the immortal Galileo experienced from the machinations of the court of Rome, framed, as he himself expresses it, "by three most powerful engineers, *envy, ignorance, and impiety*," may serve as an example of the blasting influence of the Papal breath over every thing in the shape of improvement or amelioration, and of the chains in which the human mind was kept by the influence of a court, whose head the Pope, was proverbially known for his *abhorrence of genius and literature*. Galileo, having published his system of the World, and especially his discovery of the Earth's motion round the Sun; the cry of heresy was immediately raised by the ignorant monks and other *soi-disant* learned savages, that surrounded the papal throne; among whom Ballarmin, the Jesuit, and jesuitical polemic, rendered himself conspicuous for the strength of his lungs, in crying down a truth, which with all his school chaotic knowledge, he could not understand. His preachers, choosing their text from the Acts of the Apostles "Viri Galilei, quid statis aspicientes in cœlum" (Men of Galilee, why do ye stand looking towards the heavens?) without considering the *sin* of punning upon the Divine Word, were also encouraged by him to denounce as a heresy, what their brutal minds were incapable of understanding. The immortal author was summoned to Rome by Urban VIII, to stand his trial for heresy; that is, for promulgating a truth, acknowledged by all succeeding ages. Though an old man, and of an appearance so venerable as to be able to command respect from a synod of savages, he was placed by the inquisitors, worse than savages, in their horrible dungeons, and treated in other ways with the greatest barbarity. After fifty days imprisonment he was ordered by them even without hearing his defence, or without their going through the formality of attending to it, to abjure, curse and detest (abjurare, maledicere, et detestare, are the express words) the *motion* of the earth, of the truth of which he was so intimately convinced. Thus, *because his stupid godship the pope says*, "the Earth remains firm," his "*ipse dixit*" must have



gour in laying open to his fellow-mortals the wonders of the creation, and thereby increasing their love and adoration for the Creator; or as the re-establishment of that pure form of worship, which God vouchsafed to manifest to mortals, though at the sacrifice of his only begotten son, and which condescension and goodness on the part of God, and obedience on the part of His Son were rendered of no avail to obtain the ends for which they were designed, through human inventions, and diabolical substitutes; whether, in fine, the reformation be looked upon in either a temporal or spiritual point of view, it must be acknowledged from its consequences so fraught with benefits to man, that the finger of God directed its beginning and its progress, and that those, who bore so conspicuous parts in it, acted under the immediate guidance of the Spirit of truth.

Having thus taken a hasty glance at the rise and progress of indulgences, and at the blessed event, which, through *their unwilling* agency was brought about in the sixteenth century; let us now proceed to examine the present state of that profitable doc-

more weight than the convincing arguments to the contrary of a Galileo, and the sun must move round the earth *under pain of excommunication*. After ages have done justice to Galileo, and even after popes, forgetting the honor and infallibility of their predecessors, have been obliged to acknowledge the truth of his system, which is now publicly taught in all the Italian schools. What becomes then of papal infallibility, when facts of this nature stare the reader of history in almost every page? Popish controvertists will say, "Oh! that is not fair, for we claim infallibility for His Holiness only in things appertaining to religion, and not in those belonging to philosophy!" Don't be alarmed, good deceivers of mankind, I will push my argument no farther; but simply ask, calling to your mind the old saying, "*ne sutor ultra crepidam*," why then does he mingle in things which do not appertain to him and which he does not understand?

trine, and the manner it is actually carried on in the church of Rome. Indulgences seem to have lost their value in modern times. The light of pure Christianity scattered abroad by the endeavours of protestant missionaries, and the more general education of the people of all countries, except those in which popery is the only religion tolerated, by which I mean Spain and Italy in particular, have tended very much to lessen the esteem formerly entertained for this new method of obtaining salvation, by bringing home to the minds of the people its inefficacy, and its wide discrepancey from the way marked out in the revealed Word. In Spain and Italy, however, it is still a very profitable doctrine, and fully repays the trouble of those who preach it. It would seem from the very cautious manner in which indulgences are preached now-a-days, that popery has at length learned to blush, and that the grossly over-acted systems of impostures have at length been judged too bare-faced by their very inventors. While ever there was a probability of catching any one in their nets, the preachers of indulgences persevered in their labours, excited thereto by an insatiable thirst for gain; but when not even the most stupid, in other respects, could be any longer duped out of their money by paying for such glaring impositions, then indeed they thought it full time to sound a retreat, and hide themselves under an edict from the pope, by which His Holiness graciously granted indulgences of a certain class for—not money, for he found he could get no more of that—but for “*Pater nosters* and *Ave Marias*,” alleging for a reason of this benevolence, that the sums required for the object specified at their first promulgation, were already made up, and that therefore, he was unwilling to withhold the merits of the saints from those, who were unable to purchase them,

and who panted after their efficacy. What a charitable being His Holiness is!

This granting of indulgences for *nothing* was not done without design: Indeed the purpose of so granting them was two-fold: the first and principal, lest by formally abolishing them altogether, which would be an act of honesty, of which the church of Rome is seldom guilty, the church might seem to have erred in having ever started and made an article of faith, of so absurd a doctrine: the second, that they might not run into disuse, but remain in a kind of inactive vigour, till time, and some happy changes in the dispositions of the people might make it advisable to resuscitate them from their lethargic inactivity. This gratuitous granting of indulgences was only in force, in the states immediately subject to the temporal as well as spiritual control of Rome. These states were the first to cry out against the soul-killing imposition, because they saw daily before their eyes the use to which the money obtained at the expense of the souls of Christians was converted by those that obtained the division of the booty—by the cardinals, monks, and prelates. To stop their mouths, the above mentioned edict was published by command of His Holiness, and extended to other countries, according as such countries began to decline in purchasing the indulgences, or to take notice of their inefficacy for obtaining the end for which they were published—redemption of souls from purgatory, and remission of sin in this world.

The sale of indulgences is continued in Spain to the present time, under the pretext of supporting the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. It is called the *cruzada*. Permission is granted to those, who purchase this bull for four Spanish *Reals*, to eat meat every day in the year, lent and Fridays included.

In the reign of the late tyrannical bigot Ferdinand VII, the masters of the *posadas*, or innkeepers had the power of demanding of their guests to show their bulls before sitting down to table, and if they refused, or had eaten meat without being provided with such, they were liable to be fined or imprisoned by the secular arm. Every Spaniard, especially those who were constantly journeying, as muleteers, pedlars, beggars, &c., had small pockets made in their clothes for the purpose of holding their bulls: In this they resemble the *Rajahs*, or subjects of the Grand Signor, who are not Mahometans; for these are obliged to pay so much annually to the government for which they obtain a kind of pass, which they are obliged to constantly keep about their persons, in case of being asked for it by the Turkish officers, and not being able to produce it, they are immediately imprisoned and fined—and *bastinadoed*, to boot. The Spanish Turk, though under a weaker pretext, has imitated the Sultan in this, as he has done in many acts of tyrannical injustice, and all under the sanction and by the advice of the Christian Mufti, called by Europeans “his holiness, the pope.” The income derived from indulgences sold in the Kingdom of Spain alone, is computed at five hundred thousand dollars annually. This sum is sent to Rome, to be employed by the pope nominally, in keeping the Holy Sepulchrè free from the encroachment of infidels, but *really*, as a kind of Peter’s pence, which he converts to his own private use, or spends in satisfying the avarice of his cardinals and courtiers. As much more, very probably, is kept by the Spanish monks, and by those to whom the sale of indulgences was granted, in payment of their trouble; so that we may say, that one million of dollars is wrung from the hands of a starving population, under pretext of supporting Christianity, of

obtaining remission of sin, and of making use of food upon which the book containing the precepts of Christianity, or its Divine Author had never laid any restriction.

The same way of extorting money was attempted to be established in the Roman states; but not with equal success. The Romans are contented with the indulgences obtained for the trouble of muttering a *Pater noster*, or an *Ave Maria* before the image of some Saint, without spending their money to supply luxuries to priests. The higher classes, however, in order to keep up a show of obedience to the Church, and not through any love or respect for its ordinances, or reliance on the trumpery held out as helps to salvation, purchase the liberty of eating prohibited meats. Indeed, the Romans in general have more just notions of the value of these things than any other popish nation in the world, and if they had the power, I am confident, they would soon free themselves from them altogether. But they are kept in awe by the cannons of St. Angelo and Austrian bayonets; and are therefore obliged to patiently submit to evils they cannot prevent. The time will come, however, and in all probability it is not far distant, when the former masters of the world will be freed from the galling trammels of their purple tyrants, and show to the world, that though they may have lived for ages under their rod, yet the hereditary horror of slavery is not entirely extinct in their breasts, though it may have been rendered torpid through inability to exercise it, and seem smothered under oppression; and that they do not dishonour the glorious name of "Romans" left to them by their warlike ancestors.

The bishops of each diocess in those countries where popery predominates, have also the privilege of selling indulgences attached to their episcopal



office. This privilege is understood as one farmed directly from the pope, to whom, as farmer-general of the merits of Christ, and the saints, they are obliged to pay an annual rent; and as it forms one of the *items* of their income, they endeavour to cry up as much as possible the value of the ware. The inferior clergy, and parish priests, are directed by them, accordingly, to inculcate on the minds of the people, the value and efficacy of indulgences, and the certainty of redeeming from the tormenting regions of purgatory, the souls of their parents, friends, and benefactors, by purchasing the bulls by which they are granted. Bishops, who are ambitious of attaining to higher dignities in the church, or who are desirous of being translated from the poor diocesses to which they are appointed, to richer ones, cannot practise a better method to propitiate the court of Rome, and to forward their own ambitious and avaritious designs, than by sending to the pope large sums of money, under pretext of its being collected by the sale of indulgences. This species of simony is extensively practised by popish priests and prelates, and perhaps nine out of ten of the bishops, who are set over diocesses, had no greater qualification for that high office, than bribery, and the weight of their purses. There are some cases on record of bishops having been summoned to Rome to answer for misconduct, because they had not transmitted, either through inability or roguery, the usual sum annually required at their hands. If they should plead, in excuse, that they were unable to dispose of the indulgences, and that their flocks were either unable, or unwilling, to purchase them, they are immediately answered, "that they had not exerted themselves in preaching their efficacy, for otherwise the people would sell every thing they

had, in order to become possessed of such inestimable treasures.”

I knew an old Neapolitan bishop, of the Capuchin order, who was created bishop of Cotrone, in Calabria, at the request of the king of Naples, but being unable to pay the accustomed sum annually to the pope, he was accused of heresy, at Rome, and confined to his convent, at Salerno, for the remainder of his days. It turned out, afterwards, that the pope, Leo XII, of immortally infamous memory, had sold his diocese to one who was both able to satisfy his avarice and to pay regularly the stipulated sums, but with little disadvantage to himself, for he obliged his flock to provide themselves with indulgences, whether they liked them or not. Such a bishop as this was in a fair way of preferment at the court of Rome, whilst the poor old Capuchin, more scrupulous, perhaps, (though, indeed, few of that order are troubled with scruples,) was suspended, and driven from his diocese, it is said, on account of the delicacy of his conscience. He seemed to be a very worthy old man, and had passed through the different gradations of his order with *eclat*. I was present at his death, in the Capuchin convent of Salerno, and heard the above reason assigned by one of the monks, for his disgrace; but whether it was not rather through indolence than conscience he refused to preach, or cause to be preached, the doctrine of indulgences, which was the only way he had of making up the pope's tribute, I am unable to judge, but suspect it was rather through the former, especially when it be taken into consideration, that he was a man of a very advanced age, and therefore incapable of that vigour required to enforce his orders. It seems, also, highly improbable, that in his old age, the workings of conscience would oblige him to finish a long life of preaching and practising

the worst tenets of Rome, with a denial of the truth of such tenets, by refusing to exercise himself to the last, in propagating them: it is, in fine, possible, that he had been touched with conviction of their fallacy, even at that late period, though, indeed, judging from daily experience, it is highly improbable, and if it be true, it is a thing *unique* in its kind, for men, especially monks, generally die as they have lived.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

Conscientious Bishops—Monsignor Gondolfi—Maronites—Monsignor Gondolfi sent in the character of Apostolic Delegate to the Eastern Churches—Decline of Popery. and cause of that decline, among the Maronites—Gondolfi's Instructions—Cunning of His Holiness, cloaked under a love for the souls of the Maronites—Gondolfi's early Life—State of the Monks attached to the Holy Sepulchre, at Jerusalem—Gondolfi endeavours to reform them—The Monks accuse him of heresy, at the Court of Rome—Obliged to be on his guard against the machinations of the Monks—He removes to Mount Libanus—State of the Maronite Clergy and People—Distribution of the Scriptures made by the Protestant Missionaries among the Maronites—The Maronite Clergy accuse Gondolfi, at Rome—He is recalled, but refuses to obey—He is expelled from the Convent—Arrival of his successor—Bibles burned by thousands—Gondolfi is poisoned by a Maronite Priest—The Maronites report that his death was caused by the vengeance of God—Indulgences for committing Sin—Alexander VI—Massacre of St. Bartholemew—Fra Paolo—Curious Theological Disquisition.

THERE are, however, some bishops—and it is to be lamented, that they are so few—whose consciences *are not* “*seared with a hot iron,*” and

who endeavour, as far as they can do it without danger to themselves, to lead those committed to their charge through the Gospel path of salvation, and to preach more frequently the doctrines of Christ than the doctrines of men. These lay little stress on the value of indulgences, and other popish inventions, though they are obliged to keep private their aversion for such trumpery, lest they might incur the displeasure of the pope, and his myrmidons. Whenever it is discovered that they teach their flock to place greater reliance on Christ and his merits, than on the pope and his saints; and when the deficit in their annual returns for the sale of indulgences proves their little zeal in preaching them; (though such as wish to remain in favour with Rome, make up the required sum from their own private income, if they be rich enough;) they are then accused of heresy, like the old Capuchin bishop mentioned above, and if their persons be in the immediate power of the pope, they are *inquisitioned*, that is, they are hurled into the dungeons of that horrid tribunal. Indeed, bishops of this description are popish only in name, and generally oppressed by the overwhelming power of papal influence, long before an opportunity presents of being of any permanent service to the cause of Christ. They want but the opportunity, to become zealous Christian pastors; and had their lot been cast in other countries than those groaning under papal bondage, they would exhibit themselves true and faithful preachers of the Gospel of salvation, and be inestimable blessings to the people among which they might be placed. As it is, such as are of this class—and, perhaps, one out of a hundred may be found—and not more—they endeavour as far as they can, without personal danger, to preach Christ, and Him crucified, to their people, to lay open to them the hopes of salvation

as written in the book of life, and to leave the peculiar doctrines of popery, (which, if their real opinions were known, they would be found to consider anti-Christian,) in the back ground, or pass them over as unworthy of notice.

The Italian missionary bishop, Monsignor Gondolfi, who was sent by the pope, in the character of "apostolic delegate," to the churches of the Maronites,\* and

\* A sect of eastern Christians, who follow the Syrian rite, and who submitted to the papal yoke in 1182. They are called *Maronites* from Maro, their first bishop, who, it is supposed by some ecclesiastical writers, was a strenuous defender of the doctrine of the Monothelites, or those who allowed but one will in Jesus Christ, (from *μονον*, alone, single, *θελημα*, will,) and who, flying from the convent of St. Maro, situated upon the borders of the Orontes, came to Mount Libanus, and instructed the inhabitants in that doctrine. The modern Maronites endeavour to contradict this general opinion, and to maintain, that their ancestors had always lived in obedience to the see of Rome, and had always held the doctrines established as orthodox by that church. But their arguments seem very weak in support of that claim, for the united testimonies of many historians, well acquainted with the subject, and who had recourse to most authentic records, fully prove that they were not only formerly Monothelites, but also held that doctrine down to the time of submitting themselves to the authority of Rome, in the twelfth century. Mosheim tells us, "that the Maronites stipulated to submit themselves to the spiritual jurisdiction of the church of Rome under the express condition, that neither the pope, nor his emissaries, should attempt to abolish, or change, any thing that related to their ancient rites, or religious opinions; so that, in reality, there is nothing to be found among them that savours of popery, except their attachment to the Roman pontiff." This may have been very true in the days of Mosheim, but it is evident from the relation of modern travellers, and missionaries, that the Maronites, now-a-days, are thorough papists, whether regarded in their superstitious observances of popish doctrines and usages, or in their servile adherence to the purple tyrant of the western churches. There are some Maronites, how-



other popish churches on Mount Libanus, may serve as an example of a virtuous, conscientious man, struggling against popish delusions, and endeavouring to direct the people to whom he was sent, to Christ for salvation, and not to the pope, and his impositions. The story of this worthy man I learned at Smyrna, Asia Minor, from those, (chiefly protestant missionaries,) who were personally acquainted with him, and who to this day, lament his untimely death, caused, as will be seen in the sequel, by the machinations of Rome.

Monsignor Gondolfi was commissioned, by the court of Rome, to proceed to the east, under the title of "delegato apostolico," or apostolic delegate. His implied duty was to take care of the interests of the church of Rome in that quarter, and to impress upon the minds of the inhabitants the peculiar doctrines of that church, which, as was complained of by the Maronite clergy, were fast losing ground, through the exertions of protestant missionaries,

ever, in Syria, who still behold the church of Rome with aversion, and some of that nation, residing in Italy, have been known to oppose the pope's authority in the last century, and to unite themselves to the Waldenses, in the valleys of Piedmont, whilst others, to the number of six hundred, with a bishop and several ecclesiastics at their head, fled into Corsica, and implored the protection of the republic of Genoa, against the violence of the inquisitors. The patriarch of the Maronites, who is always called Peter, as if he claimed to be the lawful successor of that apostle, lives in the monastery of Cannubin, on Mount Libanus. He is elected by the clergy and the people, though since their subjection to the church of Rome, he is obliged to have a bull of confirmation from the pope. There are innumerable monasteries of Maronite monks on Mount Libanus, and in other parts of Syria; all distinguished, like their western brethren, for their abominable superstitions, supine ignorance, and last, not least, for their endeavours to increase the general ignorance of the people, and to enrich themselves at their expence.

and the distribution of the Scriptures made by them. He was instructed to warn the people against the light of the Gospel, shed abroad by the labours of those missionaries, and to bring them back, if possible, to the state of darkness and irreligion in which they were prior to their labours among them. The Maronite priests and monks were *to be* considered as the more especial object of his mission: these he was to exhort, and encourage to be constant, and persevering in preaching the popish doctrines, and in leading the people to a blind reliance on them for salvation. As a stimulus to their zeal, he was supplied, by his holiness, with a camel-load of bulls, containing indulgences enough to wash Mahomet himself from his sins, if the Arab prophet could be supposed foolish enough to place any reliance upon them. These bulls, he was at liberty to dispose of to the monks, and other priests, of Mount Libanus, at a very low price—so much per hundred—who could afterwards retail them at higher rates to the people, and thus be gainers by the speculation: his instructions even went farther; for if he found the clergy unable, or unwilling, to purchase the indulgences, he was commanded to give them at first cost, and for what they are *really* worth—nothing. By this policy, the pope hoped to get rid of his superfluous stock of indulgences which he very prudently considered it more advantageous to dispose of at half price, or even for what they cost himself—nothing,—than to have them lying as useless lumber on his hands, and also, he was certain of one good effect proceeding from thus disposing of them, for he would thereby enlist the avarice of the Maronite priests in support of his authority, who would be obliged, whilst making sale of them to the people, and crying up their value, to

*mingle* the authority of himself—the granter of them, with the praises of their efficacy.

This attempt to revive the dying superstitions of the Maronites was very well planned, and would very probably have had the desired success, had the man selected for carrying it into execution, remained faithful to the trust reposed in him; and which he could not do, unless, at the same time, he wished to remain *unfaithful* to God, and the dictates of his own conscience; for no one can serve two masters, *God*, and mammon—God and the pope. Monsignor Gondolfi then chose the better part, and preferred the service of God to the service of God's enemy—in fine, he chose rather to be faithful to God, though at the same time he exposed himself to the machinations of that church, which has long since dyed her garments in the blood of God's people, and which, a short time after, added him to the number of those, who, at the day of judgment, will be crying out for vengeance against her—their murderer. He had long before his appointment to the eastern mission, lamented the fallen state of the Romish church, and the innumerable absurd doctrines palmed upon the people by that church, as the essential and component parts of Christianity. Born of humble parents, with property barely sufficient to give himself and his brother, (an eminent physician, still living, I believe, at Damascus,) a liberal education, he early distinguished himself among his equals for his talents and acquirements, and attracted the notice of a cardinal, whose name I do not now recollect, who was his patron and friend during life; moved thereto, not by the adventitious circumstances of rank or riches, but by the inherent merits of young Gondolfi. *Through* his patronage and protection, he was, at an early age, created a prelate of the Romish church, having first render-

ed himself distinguished in most of the Italian pulpits, for his eloquence and preaching. He was at his fiftieth year made "*Episcopus in partibus,*" or a bishop in pagan countries, and soon afterwards appointed to the eastern mission. Long before his departure from Rome for Syria, he had made up his mind to do his utmost in reforming the abuses of the church of Rome, and was predetermined to follow the Gospel as his guide, and to preach Jesus Christ and not the pope, to the people over whom he might be placed in authority. It is even said, that he meditated a journey to Switzerland, and under the protection of the Swiss government, was determined to openly show his detestation for popery, but that his appointment as delegate to Syria prevented him putting into execution that design, for he considered, that he would have a wider field for propagating the religion of Jesus Christ among the Maronites, and other inhabitants of that region, than he possibly could expect to have in Switzerland, which was already blessed with many faithful preachers of the Gospel.

Upon his arrival at Jerusalem, which city, according to his instructions, he was first to visit, he opened his commission, not by producing the bulls and indulgences with which his holiness had armed him, and which, perhaps, sanctified the belly of some fish, and gave it a passport to the pope's heaven, as he very probably threw them over-board, as an useless incumbrance, long before his landing; but by openly avowing his determination of using the authority bestowed him in reforming the lives of the idle, indolent, atheistical monks, chiefly Spanish and Italian, who had convents in the holy city, under pretext of serving and officiating at the holy sepulchre.

The lives of these monks were, and still are, scandalous in the extreme. Far removed from the con-

troul of their superiors, they gave themselves up entirely to the gratification of their passions, regardless of the scandal and bad example which they were showing to Mahometans, Jews, and other infidels, for whose instruction they were sent thither. Their whole care was in amassing money; not knowing the day they would be recalled to Spain, or Italy, by their different superiors: they made an unhallowed gain of the things of the Holy Sepulchre, which, by the way, is rendered *cursed*, and polluted by them; if, indeed, the precise spot in which the body of our Saviour was deposited, be known at all:—they practised their impositions on the unfortunate pilgrims, whom the demon of superstition leads to visit that city, in hopes of obtaining some temporal or spiritual benefit; and spend, either on the spot, in carousals, or something worse, or hoard up to spend, with more refinement, on their return to their own countries, the money gained from such impositions. With these demons, in the dress of monks, had Gondolfi to combat, and restrain. He had before some knowledge of the scandalous lives they led, but had no idea of their being so monstrously wicked as he found them. He began by obliging them to preach daily to the pilgrims—a custom long since forgotten by them—by keeping them more within doors, and by prohibiting the sale of those things to which popular superstition, excited by priest-craft, had attributed some imaginary value. He preached himself constantly, and his theme was, not the value of relics, the virtue of pilgrimages, the power of the priests; but the death of Christ, by which all men were freed from sin; a subject to which the place itself added redoubled force. In the mean time, the monks, enraged at having a stop put to their nefarious practices, and feeling the loss accruing from the prohibition of the



sale of their fictitious relics of Christ, consulted with one another, and concluded, that the only way they had of recovering their lost privileges, was to endeavour to bring about the disgrace of their persecutor, Gondolfi. With this intent, they immediately despatched a letter to Rome, signed by all, as a body, wherein they accused Gondolfi of heresy, and of a wish to subvert the Roman Catholic religion in Jerusalem; they added, that he openly despised the holy places, and exhorted the pilgrims, who came to visit them through devotion, not to place any trust, or put confidence in the various objects of devotion which were pointed out to them by the monks, and to each of which were attached indulgences, granted by the supreme pontiff, to those pilgrims who devoutly worship them, and leave a sum of money for their better keeping. The latter part of their accusation had some foundation in truth; perhaps, indeed, the accusation was wholly true, though Gondolfi did not manifest immediately the design already formed, of undermining the pope's authority in the holy land; he however showed an open indifference for the sacred places, and hardly had the curiosity of a common traveller in examining them; being unwilling, no doubt, to give, in his own person, an example of devotion to things which he considered, in themselves, as neither bad nor good, but perverted into the former by those who wished to make them the means of deceiving others, and of supplying themselves with all the luxuries possible to be found in the luxurious country they were living in.

After remaining about two months in Jerusalem, during which time he laboured with the greatest diligence in bringing about the reform of the monks, and in endeavouring to keep them within the bounds of common decency, though at the greatest peril of

his life ; being obliged through fear of being poisoned—a no unfrequent practice with monks against those, who endeavour to christianize them—to be cautious of using any food, unless that purchased and prepared by his own servant ; he removed to the Maronite convent of Cannubin, where the patriarch resided, and was received by him with those marks of honour and respect, usually bestowed upon one of his high clerical dignity and on the office he held, as delegate from the church of Rome. He here had to commence his labours anew, for though he did not find the Maronite clergy so shamefully wicked as he had found the western monks in Jerusalem, he yet found them sunk into the most degraded state of ignorance and superstition, some priests being scarcely able to read the missal, not to say, understand it, whilst others were unacquainted with the first principles of Christianity. They had made extensive additions to the fictitious helps to salvation, which they were taught by those of their body, who studied at Rome. Their whole religion consisted in a reiteration of Syriac prayers, which they did not understand, in prayers and adorations of images and relics, and in fasting and abstaining from certain meats during a great part of the year. Those of the secular clergy who were married (for the pope not being able to prevent granted them the privilege of having wives) were usually employed in some handicraft trade, endeavouring to earn a subsistence for their families ; totally neglectful of every thing appertaining to the duty of a *clergyman*. In fine, according to his own words, expressed to a protestant missionary, with whom he formed an acquaintance, “he found more religion, and a juster notion of the worship of God among their neighbours the Druses, who are supposed to be semi-Mahometan—and, semi-Heathen, than among the Maronite clergy,

who are called *Christians*." If then so deplorable be the state of the clergy, what must that of the people be? Some of the people were not entirely so fallen as the generality of their priests, thanks to the labours of the protestant missionaries among them, and to the distribution of copies of the Scriptures, or detached portions of the new testament, especially the Gospels, made by them. Such of the people as were able to read, and received these books, were Christians in some sense, and a great many of them were even pious and devoted ones; but then they rendered themselves objects of persecution to their fanatical neighbours, and to the ignorant priests, who supposed that no Christianity could possibly exist without crossings, holy water, images, relics, and such like mummery. The missionaries attempted to establish schools for the instruction of their children, but without effect: those who saw the benefits likely to accrue to their offspring from education, feared the priests, if they should send them to the missionary schools; and those who could not understand these advantages, detested the missionaries too much, and therefore would as soon see their children Mahometans, as their scholars.

Such was the state of the Maronite people and clergy at the time of Monsignor Gondolfi's arrival among them. His first care was to endeavour to instruct the clergy, and to have regular sermons preached to the people. He then endeavoured to lessen their respect for the objects of their superstitious worship and to increase it for Christ and his Gospel; or rather to create a reliance on the latter, with which they were entirely unacquainted. When asked by the Maronite patriarch, whether the priests and the people had acted right in refusing the heretical books (so they called the Scriptures) which were offered them by protestant missionaries,

he used no subterfuge, but answered plainly "*they had not.*" He endeavoured to explain to them the benefits arising from a knowledge of the Sacred Writings, and the inefficacy of all other things to obtain salvation, unassisted by the revealed Word. By these, and such like discourses, he showed himself a Bible-Christian, and favourer of the reformed religion. Nor did he escape the notice of the Maronite priests, ignorant as they were, and especially of those who had acquired some comparative degree of information by studying at Rome. These excited the patriarch and their other brethren against him, so that in less than nine months, his virtues and efforts to serve them made him as hateful to the Maronites as the like qualities had before rendered him to the Jerusalem monks. Conscious however of his own pious intentions, and of the goodness of the cause in which he had embarked, he still persevered, and opposed to their insults and even attempts to take his life, in which they, at last, succeeded, nothing but mildness and firmness. Many letters were written to the court of Rome against him by the patriarch and his monks, accusing him of heresy, and of endeavouring to withdraw the Syrian Catholics from their obedience to Rome. He had long since received letters from the Propaganda peremptorily ordering his return, but these he thought proper to treat with that neglect, which they deserved. He was then formally degraded from his office, and excommunicated, notification of such proceedings being immediately transmitted to the Maronite Patriarch, who forthwith expelled him from the convent. After his expulsion, he still continued his labours among them and had collected together a small church which he daily and indefatigably instructed in the leading points of Christianity, un-mixed with the dross of Romish inventions, and had

already acquired the respect and esteem of all good men, when he was disturbed from this sphere of usefulness by the arrival of his successor in the delégacy, a bigotted fanatic, than whom Rome could not have chosen a more fitting person to carry into execution her schemes of impositions.

Unlike Gondolfi, this worthless individual whose name I do not know, began his mission by flattering the patriarch and monks in their evil practices, and superstitious worship: he overturned all the improvements made by the former, and soon brought them back to the wretched state in which he had found them. Bibles were sought for and destroyed by thousands, and all those who listened to the sermons or went to the schools of either Gondolfi or the protestant missionaries were *ipso facto* excommunicated. Gondolfi finding his influence among the people decreasing, and seeing the inutility of his efforts to resist the tide of corruption, resolved upon leaving a place, where the opposition to improvement was so vigorous. But nothing else than his death could satisfy popish rancour. Some days before the time appointed for removing to Alexandria, where he hoped to obtain a passage to Marseilles, and thence to Switzerland, he was found dead in his bed, having been poisoned at the house of a Maronite priest, who pretended friendship for him and with whom he spent the evening previous to his death. The effects of the poison administered to him (in a cup of coffee, it is supposed, and with reason too, it being the eastern custom to present a pipe and coffee to visitors) was not instantaneous: he had time to return to his own house and retire to bed, before he felt the least symptoms of indisposition, from which he never arose, being found, as already related, dead in the morning. His body was swollen to a monstrous bulk, and left unburied for more than thirty-



six hours, a very long time in that warm climate. It was at last buried by the Druses; the Maronites, who gave out that his death was caused by the visitation of God for his heresy and schism, being unwilling to pollute themselves with the touch of the body of an excommunicated person, and of one who died under the censure of the Holy Roman Catholic Church. They brought his death forward in their sermons as an example of the way in which God punishes, even in this world, those who make themselves Heresiarchs, and disseminators of heresy, and attributed it *entirely* to the vengeance of God, and never to the true cause, which they well knew—the vengeance of the church of Rome.

Thus died Monsignor Gondolfi, a man of superior talents, learning, and piety, and who, had his lot been cast among any other portion of the Christian community, than in *that of* the intolerant, and almost heathenish one of popery, would have shone forth as a brilliant light among the people of God, and contributed by his labours and example to the increase of God's kingdom, and edification of God's people. He may serve as an example of a pious man, preferring the service of Jesus Christ to worldly honours and riches, and labouring at the hazard of his life, in dissipating the clouds of darkness, (and with a certainty of irretrievably destroying his temporal prospects) in which the minds of Christians were enveloped by the worldly policy, and soul-destroying superstitions of the church, of which he was a dignitary. By the manner of his death may be *exemplified* the ways made use of by modern popery in stopping the mouths of those, whose consciences excite them to speak against and expose her abuses and impositions, and of her little regard for the heinousness of the means, so that they bring about the desired end. Probably, the miserable

man who administered the poison to his guest, Gondolfi, was armed before hand with a brief from the pope, by which he was granted indulgences for the commission of the crime, which, so far from considering in that light, he considered a meritorious act, and one worthy of eternal reward. It may be asked whether the Turkish government had not taken notice of the sudden death of so notable a character, and examined into the cause of it? To those acquainted with the distracted state of Turkey, it is needless to say, that violent deaths are so numerous, that they are looked upon as every day occurrences, and are hardly taken notice of by the government; but when they are, it is more for the purpose of extorting money from the innocent, than of bringing the murderers to justice. If then the government had examined at all into the circumstances attending Gondolfi's death, popish gold could have very easily screened the murderer from Mahometan justice: a few purses to the Turkish magistrate, and all is hushed. Let this answer satisfy those also, who are not acquainted with Turkish customs.

Indulgences are also granted for sins not yet committed, but which the purchaser of them intends to commit within a given time. These are called "*indulgenze secrete*" or secret indulgences, by the Italians, and are not sold openly; the principle being too glaringly monstrous, even in the opinion of those, who practise upon it, to meet the face of day. They are, nevertheless, obtained by making application to any one of the penitentiaries\* of St. Pe-

\* Penitentiaries in the church of Rome, are of two kinds: the first, and those to whom allusion is made above, is composed of certain priests, mostly Franciscan friars, vested by the pope with the power of absolving certain cases reserved to himself. These hold their stalls or confession-boxes in the church of St. Peter's at

ter's, and as he may judge the reasons assigned for the necessity of committing such and such sins to be satisfactory or otherwise, they are granted or withheld accordingly, though the former is more frequently the case. If the sin bargained for, be of individual advantage to the person about to commit it, the price charged is most enormous, and exceeds the abilities of the poor, who, therefore, are, through want of money, obliged to commit it first, and get absolved, *à bon marché*, afterwards; but if it be for the general advantage of the Romish church, then the penitentiary endeavours to obtain for the penitent the indulgence, or leave to commit it *gratis*; exhorting him at the same time to be diligent in performing his duty towards the church, and in consulting for her welfare, and finishing his pious exhortation with a Latin quotation from some old schoolman, which, to give it greater weight, he fathers upon Augustin, Ambrose, or some other Saint of great name, as: "*No one can have God for a father, who has not the church for a mother.*" "*Nemo potest habere Deum pro patre, qui ecclesiam non habet pro matre.*" Stus. Aug. de. Infall. sum. pon. lib. 100, cap. 1000, sec. 47, tom. 600, fol. edi. Rom. &c. He adds the name of the author, page, volume, &c., in order to increase the admiration and stupor of his unfortunate penitent.

Secret indulgences are seldom granted, as far as I could learn, for the commission of murder, robbery, &c., in cases of individuals: they are chiefly confined to the liberty of cheating, without sin, each

Rome, and to them application must be first made, in order to obtain the secret bulls. Having obtained a written order from these, the indulgence-buyer delivers it to those of the second kind, who have the immediate direction of the bulls, and who receive the money for them. What an unholy traffic!—but such is popery.

other in their commercial pursuits, in forming marriage connections within the forbidden degrees of kindred; so that a man may marry his grandmother, if he be rich enough to purchase an indulgence, (in cases of this kind, called dispensations) for so doing, in keeping a mistress, in procuring abortion; and other things of this nature. No special indulgence is required for acting in any way, however sinful, by which people called heretics might be injured in their persons, property, or character; nay, those who do not act so, fall under the censure of the church; for a general indulgence has been granted by more than one pope, for the suppression of heresy and extirpation of heretics, and all who keep faith with them, are, *ipso facto*, excommunicated, and become partakers of their alleged guilt, and liable to the same punishments. We learn from history, that secret indulgences have been often granted for the assassination of heretical kings, of disseminators of heresy, or of any others, who may have rendered themselves by their writings or influence, hateful to the church of Rome in general, or to its head; the pope in particular. The infamous Alexander VI \*

\* Of all the monsters—and they were many—that ever sat upon the papal throne, none ever came up to Alexander VI, in impiety, cruelty, and avarice. He was born in Valencia, Spain. His family was that of Borgia, and he himself was called Theodoric Borgia before his election to the popedom. Whilst yet a young man, and a Cardinal, to which dignity he was exalted by his uncle, Calistus III, though some say, that he was the latter pope's bastard, he lived publicly in concubinage with a Roman lady of great beauty, by whom he had three children—two sons and one daughter. After his election to the popedom, in 1492, he spared neither blood nor conscience in enriching these his bastards. He was the moving cause of all the wars and disturbances that harassed Europe, during that period, and seems, notwithstanding his papal dignity, to have been held in utter abomination, both by his own subjects,

was accustomed to grant indulgences under his own hand and seal, to the assassins hired by him, for the purpose of way-laying and murdering the princes or other men of rank, who fell under his displea-

and by the other nations of Europe. His eldest son Cæsar, whom he made a Cardinal at an early age, and whom he afterwards absolved from his vow of chastity, in order to marry him to the daughter of the Duke of Ferrara; this same Cæsar, murdered his younger brother, through jealousy of his being higher in the affections of their common sister, whose favours, without having any regard to the ties of consanguinity, they both equally shared—children truly worthy of such a father! The day of retribution at length came. At a dinner prepared for the express purpose of poisoning some of the Cardinals and Roman senators, whose property he coveted, or whose dignities he wanted to sell to the highest bidder, the poisoned wine was, by mistake, served up to himself, and his son Cæsar; and thus, by the just judgment of God, he fell into the pit he had made for the destruction of others. The poison had a fatal effect on the pope, and put an end—an event so anxiously wished for—to his career of crime, and impiety: his hopeful son, Cæsar, recovered from its effects by having quick recourse to an antidote, which he always carried about him, being, no doubt, conscious of the provocation his crimes gave many to attempt his life. After his father's death, he retired to his castle at Ferrara, of which town he was before made duke, where he maintained a siege of some months against an army sent by his father's successor against him. He was forced to flee from Italy in the end, and having been reduced to great poverty, he, some few years after, was found dead in a ditch, not without well-grounded suspicions of having accelerated his own end. The following epitaph, written by a popish priest of that period, will give the reader some idea of the detestation in which this impious pope was held by all classes—laical and clerical:

*Sævitiæ, insidiæ, rabies, furor, ira, libido*

*Sanguinis et diri spongia, dira sitis;*

*Sextus Alexander jaceo hic, jam libera gaude*

*Roma: tibi quoniam mors mea vita fuit.*

“Here I, (the unhappy man himself is made the narrator of his own infamy,) Alexander VI, lie: cruelty, treachery, fury, madness,



sure on account of opposing him in his unholy designs; or for whose riches he had a gaping desire, in order to enrich his bastard children, Cæsar Borgia, and brother and sister. Many other instances might be given of indulgences being granted for doing away with, either the personal enemies of popes, or the enemies of their doctrines. The foregoing one of Alexander VI, is so well authenticated, that popish historians themselves, being unable to pass it over, have been obliged to make mention of it; yet some of them endeavour to excuse it by a fine drawn distinction between "*the pope as a man, and the same as vicar of Christ, and head of the church.*" Bernini in his "*Storia di tutta l'eresia,*" a book written expressly for upholding the papal authority, mentions it, but attempts to get over it in the above way. But it may be asked both of Bernini and others; by what authority is such a monstrous doctrine supported at all? Not certainly, by that of revelation. Besides, if such a doctrine did not exist, the evil-minded popes could not use it for the gratification of their blood-thirsty propensities, and of their avarice. Why not then do away with it altogether, and for once shame the d—l by telling the truth, and confessing, that the church and pope too had erred in assuming, without authority, so monstrous a doctrine, and so dreadful in its consequences, as a part of the religion of Christ. But this would be an act of honesty, for which no one acquainted with the church of Rome, can ever suspect her; and she therefore continues heaping one error upon another, and making the latter the support of the former, till she has arrived at her present state

anger, and lust lie here; a sponge steeped in blood and horror, for which my thirst was insatiable. Now, O Rome, rejoice in thy liberty, for my death is thy life."

of corruption, as to have nothing of the religion of Christ about her but the name—so difficult it is to support a lie without calling in other lies to its assistance; to support the erroneous doctrine of infallibility without the prop of other doctrines equally erroneous. “An ounce of honesty is better than a pound of policy,” is an old saying, and had the church of Rome practised upon it, or even given ear to the moral precept “*hominis est errare, bestię autem in erroribus permanere*,” “*Men are liable to err, but none but beasts persevere in their errors*,” had she, on her first falling into error, confessed it and made reparation for it, instead of endeavouring to support it, she would not be to-day so *bestial* a church, and the stone of scandal, and rock of offence to the whole Christian world. As to the wire-drawn distinction between the official and individual character of Alexander VI, by which papicologists endeavour to cast his crimes from the pope to the man, I would gladly learn; when Alexander VI went to visit his infernal majesty in his nether dominions, as a man; (and it is no uncharitableness to say, that he has, if there be—and I have no doubt of it—a place of future rewards and punishments,) what then became of the same, as a pope?\*

\* It would seem from the following anecdote that these metaphysical distinctions are not made in favour of popes alone, but sometimes also in favour of less dignified churchmen. A German peasant seeing the Archbishop of Magdeburg, of indulgence-selling memory, who was also elector of Mentz, passing by, surrounded by his guards, and dressed in a military uniform, he burst out into an immoderate fit of laughter, which attracted the notice of the archbishop. Upon being asked the reason of his merriment, he replied, “because I see Your Grace, a churchman, dressed as a soldier.” “But don’t you know,” said His Grace, “that I am an elector of the empire, as well as an archbishop?” “yes,” answered the peasant; “but I would like to know, when Your Highness, the

The massacre of St. Bartholomew is another instance, though on a larger scale, of indulgences being granted for the destruction of those, whom the church of Rome honour with the name of heretics. Indulgences were granted beforehand for the perpetration of that horrid massacre, as is evident from the little surprise, but exceedingly great joy exhibited by the court of Rome upon receiving the news. It was a thing expected; the plot having been laid at Rome, and the necessary indulgences granted, before its execution at Paris and other parts of France. Most probably, there was a plenary indulgence, and the freedom of some hundreds of souls from Purgatory for every unfortunate Huguenot sacrificed that day to popish intolerance. A solemn *Te Deum* was sung at St. Peter's, and a public thanksgiving ordered through every church, acknowledging at its head the purpled monster, who sanctioned, and even encouraged so hellish a carnage.

One instance more, and I have done. Fra Paolo, author of the history of the council of Trent was suspected of heresy. He retired to his native city, Venice, and was protected by that republic, which felt honored in having so learned a man one of its citizens. The court of Rome, however, could not rest satisfied without his death. One of the professional *spadacini*, or assassins, who abounded in Rome at that time, (16th century) nor are they very scarce even at this day; one of these was hired by the pope and cardinals, and dispatched to Venice for the purpose of assassinating Fra Paolo; being fortified beforehand with an indulgence, and promised a large sum of money, in case of success. He had remained some time at Venice before a favorable opportunity

elector goes to the de—l, where will Your Grace, the archbishop go?"

presented of executing his commission; so cautiously did Fra Paolo, who knew the spirit of the Romish church, keep himself on his guard against her machinations. One morning, however, very early, as he was going to the house of a Venetian nobleman to assist at the last moments of one of the family, he was watched by the pope's emissary, who went up to him to kiss his hand, which is a manner of showing respect to a priest common in Italy, and being put off his guard by that act of respect received the assassin's dagger in his side. Some people coming accidentally that way, and seeing what occurred, pursued the wretch, who immediately fled, leaving the dagger in the wound. He was apprehended, and confessed the whole plot, and who were his employers, upon condition of his life being spared. The court of Rome flatly denied having given any such commission to any one; thus adding lying to treachery as is its custom. Fra Paolo, however, recovered of his wound, and kept the dagger, on which he got inscribed the words "*Stiletto della chiesa Romana, per Fra Paolo*" (the dagger of the Roman church for Fra Paolo,) as a precious relic, hung up in his bed-room during the remainder of his life. The same dagger is still preserved in one of the protestant cities of Germany, I forget which, a lasting memorial of popish treachery, and of the murderous use to which the pope converts his assumed power of granting indulgences.

Every bishop, in his own diocess, has also the power of granting secret indulgences to those of his flock that can purchase them. The same power, with which the pope has vested the penitentiaries of St. Peter's, he can also bestow upon one or two priests of his cathedral. These, like their brethren at St. Peter's, can grant indulgences for minor sins, that is, minor, when compared with murder, robbery,

&c. But not only are indulgences granted for the use and benefit of the living purchasers; but also the same purchasers, whilst in health provide themselves with indulgences, and absolutions of their crimes, sins and offences, signed, sealed, and delivered, and which are buried with them when they die. These documents are written in Latin; and serve as a passport to heaven—a sure sign, according to the opinion of the church of Rome—an infallible authority in cases of this nature—that the *gens d' armes*, and other police officers of the other world, understand Latin; otherwise how would they be able to know, whether the bearers of them *have* their passports *en regle*? as the French police say. The question was for some time disputed on in the schools of theology “whether the D—l’s police understand Latin, or not?” for that God’s police have a knowledge of that language, no one would be impious enough to doubt. After many orations and learned discourses on the different sides of the question, it was at last decided in the *negative* and the reason given was; that God would not allow a knowledge of that language to his enemies, in which the most acceptable sacrifice—that of the mass—was daily offered up to him. It was objected by the opposite side, that if the D—ls had not a knowledge of Latin, many souls armed with pontifical bulls and indulgences, might be impeded in their flight to heaven, by being stopped on the road by those who could not understand their documents; but this objection was done away with by bringing under consideration the fact of such bulls, and indulgences being always fortified with the pope’s seal, and that though the officers of Satan could not make use of their *understanding* yet they could of their *eyes*, and respect accordingly a document bearing the seal of Christ’s vicar on earth, though its contents be unknown to them; be-



ing well aware, (sagely add the theologians) that he (the pope) would never put or cause to be put, his seal, unless upon things, which cannot be otherwise than agreeable to the divine majesty!—So much for theological disputations. It may perhaps be suspected, that the foregoing question never existed, or never was disputed upon but by myself. Those, who think so, have a very erroneous idea of popish schools of theology. Not only has the above question engaged the attention of grave theologians, but thousands of such questions much more absurd and ridiculous if possible, are daily discussed by the theological students of the church of Rome. By such questions as these, is the young mind of the student drawn away from meditating upon the great truths of Christianity, and fixed upon the peculiar doctrines of popery. By seeing those minutiae so warmly defended, he, by degrees, learns to consider them as things of importance, and very soon lets go the substance—Christianity itself—and grasps at the shadow—the ravings of theologians, and the inventions of popes and cardinals—But enough of Indulgences.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

Departure from Rome—Refused permission to return to Ireland—  
 Plan of escape—How executed—Arrival at Marseilles and Lyons  
 —Geneva—Monsieur Cheneviere—Socinianism—English travel-  
 lers on the continent of Europe—Rabbi M——s, the converted  
 Jew—His perfidy—Arrival in London—Treatment received from  
 false and perfidious Friends.

HAVING in the foregoing chapters given an account of the domestic life of monks, interspersed with remarks upon some of the leading doctrines of the Romish church, I shall now proceed to relate the manner, in which, through God's mercy, I became emancipated from the galling yoke of monachism, and its disgusting practices. The manners and customs of the popish clergy of Malta, Smyrna, and the Ionian islands, will also form the subjects of some following chapters. The various stages of adverse fortune, through which I passed before arriving in America, may lead the reader to form a just notion of the difficulties, which those, who belonged to the Romish clergy, and whose consciences obliged them to separate from it, have to encounter, partly from the persecutions of their *quondam* co-religionists, and partly from the luke warmness of those, who call themselves "friends of the Gospel." How far the latter deserve that name, may be seen from the manner I myself have been treated by such gentry.—

The seventh year of my monkish life was now commencing, and I had already passed through the different studies required, before being sent as a missionary to my own country, (Ireland,) when, unable to bear any longer the mask of hypocrisy, which self-preserva-

tion obliged me to wear, I resolved upon leaving Rome, and the Roman states, and seek a refuge in some country, where I would not be forced by circumstances to appear, what I really *was not*—a servile adherent to pope and popery. I was, at this time, I must confess, a confirmed infidel, and a scoffer at Christianity, under whatever form it might appear. It was not then through any love for Protestantism, that I was so desirous to make my escape from popish thralldom. I was convinced, that Christianity was, on the whole, a fable, and the invention of self-interested men, who make use of it to domineer with greater ease over their less cunning, or less fortunate fellow creatures. I had not, at this time, the least notion, that the Christianity, with which I was acquainted in the church of Rome, and the pure genuine Christianity, established by its divine Author, were as different, as one thing could possibly be from another; the former carrying imprinted upon it the work, and handicraft of man, whilst the latter could not proceed from any other source less pure than the inspiration of the Deity. I was unable, so incredulous and sceptical had I become by the abominations of monkery, to see any benefit, that a firm belief in the blessed doctrine of atonement through the blood of Christ, could bring to man. The doctrine itself, I was acquainted with, but the way of applying it to heal the wounded spirit, or the broken heart, I was wholly ignorant of.

My health being really very bad, it required very little simulation, on my part, to persuade the convent physician to grant me a paper, by which he gave it as his professional opinion, “that an immediate removal to my native air, was absolutely necessary for the restoration of my health.” The disturbed state of my mind, weighed down by skepticism, and a consciousness of living in direct variance with my better judgment, had a

sensible effect on my bodily strength. I was fast falling into a decline, and had I remained one year, nay, a few months longer in the monkish habit, it is more than probable, that I would not be now alive to relate the abominations of monkery. Armed with the physician's certificate, which was itself confirmed by my sickly appearance, I sought the General of the order, and requested his permission to return to Ireland, without waiting until I would reach the age appointed by the canons for receiving the order of *priesthood*. I had already, as before mentioned, received the other six orders, and, indeed, had no ambition to be dubbed a priest, that is, to be gifted with the *hocus pocus* art of making *my God*. So far from the desire of being *priested* having had any share in my thoughts, I dreaded the arrival of the moment, when I would be obliged, *volens volens* to receive priests' orders. The General, however, refused to give me the required permission. The only thing I could obtain from him, was leave to go for a few months to Pisa, or Leghorn. Fearing, that I might take his refusal too much to heart, he promised me, at the same time, that he himself would use his influence with the pope, in order to obtain for me a dispensation of eighteen months, by which I could be ordained priest at the age of twenty-two years and a half—a favor seldom granted by his holiness, unless to those, who are backed by powerful interest, and able to pay well for it.

Finding that prayers and entreaties availed me little with the General and that I had very little chance of effecting my escape, if I remained at Rome, I decided upon making use of his permission to go to Leghorn, and trust to some favourable opportunity to put myself out of the reach of monkish jurisdiction. My hopes were chiefly founded upon the probability of falling in with at Leghorn, some English ves-

sel, that might aid me in my preconceived plan of flight. Upon my arrival in that city, my first care was to make acquaintance with the English consul. Fearing, however, that he might betray my intentions, I was very cautious at first in giving him a knowledge of my designs; but finding, after an acquaintance of some weeks, that he detested monkery and priestcraft as much as they deserved, I opened myself to him without reserve. He very honestly advised me to ponder well upon the probable consequences before I went too far to recede. He laid open the difficulties I might have to encounter, in order to maintain my rank in society, if I should divest myself of my profession; and brought before my eyes the lukewarmness of those, who call themselves the friends of Gospel freedom. "If however," said he, "you are determined at all hazards to shake off the yoke of monachism, I shall not be backward in affording you every assistance in my power." Having received some weeks before, a remittance of money from my father, (the last I have ever received from him) my pecuniary resources were in a state to defray the expenses of a journey to Switzerland—the nearest land of freedom, and therefore the place I made up my mind to go to, in the event of succeeding in my designs. I entrusted part of this money to the consul, in order that he might purchase secular clothes for me. To avoid all suspicion, a young man, clerk in the consul's office, presented himself to the tailor in my place; which young man being about my size and stature, the clothes that would fit him would also fit me.

Nothing was now wanting for the immediate execution of my plans, but the falling in with some vessel, that would take me aboard and land me at Marseilles, without requiring the necessary papers from the civil authorities at Leghorn. It was use-



less to expect, that any Tuscan, or Italian ship-master would run the risk ; my whole dependence then was upon meeting with some English or French vessel, about to sail for the above port. The former luckily presented after some weeks anxious expectation on my part. An English brig having taken in part of her cargo at Leghorn, had to touch at Marseilles to take in the remainder. The Consul introduced me to her captain, who readily consented to take me aboard, and land me at Marseilles. The latter positively refused, at the same time, to receive any compensation for his trouble; observing, "that he deemed it a sufficient reward, if he could be the means of rescuing a fellow countryman from slavery." All things being in readiness for my flight, I accompanied the captain in his own boat aboard, under pretext of seeing him put to sea ; his ship being already outside the harbour's mouth, and only waiting his coming aboard to set sail. The moment then, that I placed my foot on the deck, I pronounced myself *free*, and out of the grasp of monkish tyranny. Indeed it would require the exercise of all the miraculous power, to which monks lay claim, to get me again within their clutches.

One thing, however, happened very unfortunately, and was well nigh frustrating the whole plan. The secular clothes, which were prepared for me, were left ashore at Leghorn, either through design or accident—I do not know, which. I attribute it, however, to the treachery of the person, to whom the consul entrusted them, in order to carry them aboard ; and by no means, to the consul, himself. The latter had kindly provided me with an English passport, whereby I was described as a British subject, on a travelling excursion. This was sufficient to excite the suspicion of the French authorities ; and had I arrived in France in a monkish habit, some

fifty years earlier, that is, had I arrived there a few years before the first French revolution, I would have learned to my cost, that Italy was not the only country in the world, wherein monks are imprisoned for attempting to throw off the yoke of monachism. But France had—luckily enough for me—emancipated herself from priestcraft, and monkery, long before my arrival ; and I therefore experienced no greater difficulty from being habited as a monk ; than what proceeded from being stared at, and laughed at, on account of my (to them) unusual, and uncouth dress.

After a few weeks' stay at Marseilles, during which I was pestered with invitations from the popish bishop to call upon him at his palace, and which invitations, I took the liberty to neglect ; I set out for Lyons, still dressed in the monastic habit : indeed, finding, that this dress did not expose me to any danger in France, I resolved not to lay it aside, until I arrived in Switzerland. At Lyons, I obtained from some protestant clergymen, with whom I became acquainted, letters of introduction to many of the Swiss clergy. Having spent a few days in that city, I departed for Geneva—the cradle of continental protestantism, and the seat of the arts, and sciences. My letters of introduction were then of use to me. Through them, I soon made the acquaintance of the greater part of the Geneva clergy ; and among others, of Messieurs Malan and Cheneviere. To the latter more especially, I am indebted for many favours. He is professor of Theology in the University of Geneva ; and though a Socinian in his religious opinions, yet a truly just and upright man.

Monsieur Cheneviere was the only true and sincere friend, that I met with at Geneva. His views on religious matters I do not, by any means approve

*at this time*, though, when at Geneva, I entered into them with the greatest ardour ; not that I liked Socinianism for its own sake, but rather, because it approached nearer to my own system of natural religion, into which I had been hurled through disgust of popish superstitions. Were we to judge of the truth or falsehood of a religion from the lives of its professors, Socinianism, judging it from the lives of some of its professors at Geneva, and more especially, from the life of Cheneviere, would be found a much safer religion, and much more in accordance with the Gospel precepts, than a truly evangelical Christianity, when judged by the lives of some of those, who, making themselves champions for the truth, "*as it is in Jesus*," take very little care to practise any of the doctrines, and precepts of Jesus. However that may be, one thing I am convinced of, is this, "that if the Divinity of the Founder of Christianity is not an essential article of a Christian's belief ; neither then is Christianity itself necessary to his salvation." If Christ be not God—a title he has given to himself ; he must then be a liar, and the greatest monster that ever appeared in this world ! If those misguided men, who deny the Divinity of the Saviour, were but for one moment to reflect upon the awful consequences deducible from that denial, they would certainly feel as much shocked, as I myself have felt whilst writing the foregoing sentence ; and humbly cry out with Thomas "*My Lord and My God*." Let us hope, however, that the fault of the greater number of those, who deny the divinity of Christ, is to be attributed more to the understanding, than to the will, and that He, whose power and divinity they deny, will in his own good time, convince them of both by changing their hearts, and thereby make them fit for the reception of so great a truth—a truth of

Such essential importance, that it has been justly called “the foundation stone, on which are built the other truths of the Christian religion.”

I have been led into the foregoing digression by the name of Mr. Cheneviere, a man, from whom I have received much kindness, and whom I esteem for his moral virtues, though I cannot esteem him for the more important virtues, which religion can produce. I am very sure, however, that he was a Socinian, and remained so, not through any worldly motive, but because he was fully convinced of the truth of that religion. To sum up his character in a few words, it may be truly said of him “that as a natural-minded man, he was little below an angel; but as a theoretical Christian, alas! he was on the road to destruction.” If, however, his natural disposition unassisted by divine illumination, could lead him to be a philanthropist; what would he not become, were the clouds, in which his mind was enveloped, dissipated, and he could be brought to see and acknowledge the atoning love of a Divine Saviour?

I had not been many days at Geneva, before I divested myself of the mark of the “*beast*,” or of one of them, at least;—I mean, the monkish habit, which I had the gratification of burning. This was the last remnant of popery, of which I was in possession, having consigned to the deep some time before, whilst on the passage to Marseilles, beads, scapulars, and such like trumpery. Mons. Cheneviere invited me to make his house, my home, until he could have an opportunity of procuring me a situation, by which I could earn a subsistence. I became one of his family, and was treated by every individual member of it, with the greatest attention, and kindness. I shall, indeed, ever retain a grateful remembrance of Madame Cheneviere, and her



children, and must always feel pleasure, when I recall to mind, the happy, delicious moments, I spent in the society of this amiable family. I have not the least doubt, but Mons. Cheneviere would have placed me, if I had remained under his protection, and in his house, in the way of becoming independent, and of making reparation for the sacrifice I had made, in quitting the profession, on which my future advancement in life wholly depended. His influence was very great, not only at Geneva, but also in other parts of Switzerland; indeed in every place, where he was known, deference was paid to his opinion, and letters. He could then very easily have procured me employment, had I not been induced by the persuasions of self-interested and designing men to quit his hospitable roof, and plunge myself headlong into the misery, in which I have lived during the last two years. How this came about will need some explanation.

Geneva is very much frequented by English travellers, especially by those who either really, or affectedly, (the latter, of course, being the greater number,) are religiously inclined. When cloyed by the round of dissipation in which they are accustomed to live in the principal Italian cities, these birds of passage, (as the Italians call them,) betake themselves to Switzerland, and not knowing what else to do with themselves, become as beastly religious, as they were before beastly licentious. As it was the fashion, whilst in Italy, to be a *connoisseur* in *paintings, statues, mosaics, &c.* so, the fashion, whilst at Geneva, is changed into that of being a *violent anti-papist*, and a critic on popish superstitions. These people are, for the most part, without any religion whatever. Their observations on the manners and customs of the Italians, are most ridiculous, and their strictures on popery, which



they do not understand,\* most diverting. They endeavour to speak of the manners, and customs, of a people whose language they do not understand. Those that have acquired some smattering of it, pronounce it so barbarously, that the Italians can hardly keep their countenances, whilst listening to the mutilation of their language. I have never yet met with an Englishman who could speak, even tolerably well, any of the continental languages.†

To this flock of wild geese, which I have been describing, there is generally attached a charlatan, who calls himself “a clergyman of the church of

\* I remember to have seen the following in a book of travels, written by a Cockney, who made the “*grand tour* :” “The churches, (at Rome,) are, for the most part, dedicated to the Virgin. She is styled, in the inscription over the church doors, “equal to God the Father”—in Latin “*Deiparæ Virgini*.” What a blunder! Had not the Cockney some friend, who could inform him, that “*Deiparæ*” is compounded of *Deus*, and *pario*—to bring forth, and not from *Deus* and *par*—equal. Popery is bad enough, without charging to her account the errors of those who do not understand her, and yet endeavour to describe and criticise her.

† The curious mistakes they make whilst endeavouring to translate their English commands into Italian—*pure* Italian, to be sure—are most laughable. I shall mention one of them. An English traveller, who had tumbled by the mere force of gravity from the Alps, (Brooks says so, not I,) found himself, (by what means, he hardly knew himself,) housed in one of the hotels at Pisa. Thinking it too much trouble to halloo to the servant, when he wanted any thing, he directed, that a small bell should be brought into his room. Now, *campanella*, means in Italian, a small bell; *campanile*, means, on the other hand, a belfry. Our Englishman, mistaking one word for the other, ordered, that a “*campanile*” should be brought to him. The servant, nearly bursting his sides with laughter, took him to the window, and pointing to the belfry of the cathedral, asked him “if that “*campanile*” would do for him; because then, he would be obliged to pay for pulling it down, and transporting it into the room.”

England.” He is, for the most part, the youngest son of some aristocratic English family. Being unfit for any thing else, he is thrust, through the interest of his family, into the church, as the only profession wherein his want of qualifications could pass unnoticed. This, very probably, is the reason, that the church of England, so pure, and so evangelically Christian, in her doctrines, approaches so very near to popery in her practices, and that she has acquired for herself the name of “the eldest daughter of the scarlet whore.”

The man who called himself “English chaplain,” at Geneva, whilst I resided in that city, was not, however, either the son of a nobleman, or even of a private gentleman: he was neither more, nor less, than a *soi-disant* converted Jew, who sold his religion to some of the bishops of the church of England, for more than the small share of it he possessed, was worth—for *two hundred pounds sterling, a wife, and ordination*. His name is M—, the *worthy* descendant of a Polish Jew, who established himself in London, in the trade of an old clothes-seller, a few years before his scape-grace son thought proper to embrace Christianity. The son, after renouncing—what? not the Jewish religion surely;—well, after saying “I am a Christian,” immediately obtained the “*siller*,” and the wife; who, by the way, seems to have been created expressly for him; so much is she like him in littleness of mind, and deformity of body and soul. Ordination was not received, however, with the same facility. The bishops scrupled to ordain so illiterate a man. Having, however, got him instructed, *unde, unde*, in some way or another, and being ashamed to break their promise to him, they, at length, ordained him, also. Being unable to obtain a curacy, or parish in England, he set out for Geneva, and en-

deavoured to procure a subsistence for himself, and his "*dulce bene*," by preaching a religion he did not understand, to the deistical English travellers, who winter, or summer, or—*what you please*, in that city. These, however, soon grew tired of his ignorance, which was only surpassed by his impudence, and he was obliged to pack up his *alls*,—his wife and child—and return back to England. He spent nearly six months, after his return from Switzerland, in a state of starvation, through the streets of London, till Lord W——, compassionating his miserable condition, gave him a parish in Ireland, on his estate, near Arklow. He now resides at the latter place, metamorphosed, by the magical hand of the basest of Irish noblemen, from a Jewish vagabond into a preacher of the Gospel to the poor Irish. What a preacher! How, indeed, must the Irish love protestantism, when they have such a sample of its ministers before their eyes, as this curious compound of roguery, deceit, and ignorance presents! This cursed Jew now actually receives in tithes more than two thousand dollars annually from a starving population. He is known in Arklow, and its neighbourhood, as a most hard-hearted, avaricious, unfeeling wretch—a sure sign, that when he pronounced the words "I am a Christian," he had forgotten to throw off his Jewish propensities. I am confident, that his presence in Ireland is worth more than £2000 sterling, to the popish priests, who can point him out to their flock, as an example of the effects of protestantism. If there were a dozen—and thank God there are not half that number—of such protestant clergymen in Ireland, the priests would sing a "*Te Deum*," and thank the land-owners, and tithe-owners, and middle-men, &c. for sending among them so many foreign vagabonds, by whose endeavours they might be assisted in imposing on

the people; for the pernicious example of Rabbi M——s, and his coadjutors, would have as much effect in increasing the priests' power over the people, as the endeavours of the priests themselves.

I have entered into a longer description of this Judaizing protestant clergyman than I at first intended. I know, that what I have written of him is literally the truth. His early life I learned at Geneva from those who knew him well; and his present condition, I know from personal observation, made during a residence of some time, near his parish. Let not, however, any one imagine, that I have brought his name forward in this book, in order to injure him in the public estimation. This book will never be seen, by those, whose duty it would be to remove so great a disgrace from the respectable body of Irish clergy, and therefore it cannot be through any motive of that kind, that I make mention of him. It might, perhaps, be suspected, that I do it, in order to vent my spleen against one, who treated me unkindly; and that I magnify his faults, and pass over his virtues, in order to make his character more detestable. I can only say, in answer, that were I desirous of venting my spleen, I would have taken some other method of doing so, besides contaminating the pages of this work by the introduction of private quarrels. As to my magnifying his faults, there is no occasion for me to take that trouble; for they are already as conspicuous, as the most powerful *lens* could possibly make them. His virtues, I must confess, I have never been able to discover; and his nearest friends, however lynx-eyed they might be in looking for them, must, I believe, confess the same. I have simply brought him forward, as being the person, by whose perfidy, I have been precipitated into the greatest difficulties, and who endeavoured to make me the tool, by which

he might acquire a name for himself—the name of having converted a popish priest.

I was residing in the family of Mons. Cheneviere, when my evil stars brought me acquainted with M—— and another English clergyman who was at that time *vegetating* at Geneva. The latter's name is D——n. He was, when I knew him, travelling tutor (a kind of upper *valet-de-chambre*) to Lord Jocelyn, son to the Earl of Roden, and nephew to the bishop of Clogher, the same with him *who disgraced* himself and the church, not many years ago. D——n made himself nearly as conspicuous as M——s in seducing me. This "*par nobile fratrum*," this pair of clerical miscreants so worked on my mind by their deceitful promises, that I at last, in an evil hour, consented to withdraw from the protection of my kind friend Cheneviere, and commit myself friendless, and destitute to an unfeeling world. They promised, that they would obtain for me admission into the church of England, as one of her ministers, and persuaded me to go to London, where they would introduce me by letter to the Reformation Society. I consented, and—was undone.

Upon my arrival in London, nearly pennyless, I endeavoured to earn a subsistence by teaching. The only person, who took the least notice of me, was Lieutenant R——d, who was at that time, secretary to the Reformation Society. So far from being able to obtain employment as a clergyman, I could not obtain it even as a schoolmaster. Lieutenant R——d told me plainly, that I had been deceived, and that neither D——n, nor M——s had the power, nor the interest, nor indeed the will of keeping their promises to me. It was evident, that all they wanted was the name of having made a convert,



quite regardless, what might be the future lot of that unfortunate convert. My religious opinions were decidedly Socinian. Of this I made no secret. Those, who wished to persuade me that Christ was God made use of arguments, which only strengthened me in my own opinion. Their arguments were persecution. Indeed, I found as much bigotry, and uncharitableness in the greater part of the clergymen of the church of England, with whom I became acquainted, as I ever had found in a monk-house. Nor is this any wonder. The church established "by law," in England is, in her practices, *though not in her doctrines*, but very little removed from popery. Her clergy are, for the most part, distinguished for a persecuting spirit against those, who dissent from her institutions and doctrines. Many of the English clergy do not even understand the spirit of their church, and not few might be found, who never read the thirty-nine articles, which they swear to, before their ordination. They embraced the ecclesiastical state as a profession, and because some rich livings were in the gift of their families and friends. What popery is in Italy, the national church is in England; with this sole difference, that the former is corrupt both in doctrine and practice: the latter in practice *only*.

I spent five months in London, in a most miserable condition. The letters, which I sent to my false friends at Geneva, were never answered. D—n, and M—s had obtained their ends. I had served their purpose; I was converted, and *converted* through their means, (so at least, they *lyingly* reported) and they required nothing more. Lieut. Rhind wrote to D—n for my ecclesiastical papers, which I had entrusted to his care, whilst at Geneva. His answer was, "that he had not them," thus adding a breach

of trust to his perfidious, and ungentlemanly conduct.\* Finding my situation no longer supportable, and being ashamed to seek an asylum from my family in Ireland, after the step I had taken, I resolved to return to the continent again, and endeavour to find that subsistence among foreigners, which was denied me in England, on account of the bigotry, and bad faith of those, who call themselves “friends of the Gospel.” The following two years, I spent partly in France, and partly in the islands of the Mediterranean under British government, and at Smyrna, Asia Minor.

I have been thus diffuse in relating the manner of my escape from monkery, and the treatment I received from cold-hearted, selfish men, who *call themselves* protestants, in order that the reader might be able to form a judgment of the difficulties thrown in the way of those, who desert from the ranks of popery. There are, to my certain knowledge, hundreds of popish priests in England, and Ireland, who would leave popery to-morrow, if they had the means of subsisting without it. Whilst English protestants are so lukewarm and selfish, there is very little probability that they will leave the ease and affluence of their professions for the poverty and hardships, they are most likely to undergo as protestants.

\* If the man known in England by the name of the Rev. H. Dalton, tithe-owner of Wolverhampton, should by any chance, cast his eyes upon this page, let him be assured, that the author of this book will send a voice across the Atlantic, if he does not, in a short time, deliver up to—he knows, to *whom*—the papers, which were entrusted to him at Geneva, and which he had the baseness to deny having received. *A word to the wise*; and if that Rev. gentleman be as wise, as he is thought by some, he will immediately comply with this lawful request.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

State of Religion in Malta—Number of Popish priests—Their Ignorance—Ignorance of the people—Bishop Caruana—Power of the pope in Malta—Anecdote of a Maltese Attorney—Doctor Naudi—Maltese medical college—Naudi's treachery—He is found out by an English missionary—Maltese monks—Number of monasteries in Malta—Paulotists—Dominicans—Carmelites—Ignorance of the Maltese monks—Convent of Capuchins at Malta—Padre Pietro, the Capuchin *Custode*—Padre Calcedonio—Story of a child violated by him in Santa Maura—He is sent to the galleys—Remission of his sentence, through the influence of General Rivarola—Esteemed as a saint by the Maltese.

The *how*, the *when*, and the *wherefore*, I visited the Island of Malta, can be but little if indeed any, importance to the reader. Be it sufficient therefore to mention, that I established myself in that Island, not long after my escape from monastic slavery. I shall then, in this and the following chapter, endeavour to give an account of the actual state of popery, and of the popish priesthood, with which it is pestered. This account drawn from personal observations made during the seven months I resided in the island, will not, I hope, be wholly void of interest. My means of acquiring information on this subject, were unlimited, for I had easy access to some of the principal Maltese families, and had an extensive acquaintance among the clergy. Its accuracy may be the more relied upon, because, at that time, worldly prudence, and the fear of persecution made me dissemble my real belief in religious matters, and therefore I could observe without any suspicion. The persecution which I so much feared came in the end and annoyed me not a little, so that I thought it prudent to leave the Island. My former profes-

sion was discovered by a monk, who came from Rome to Malta on some business of his order, and who was one of my college companions. He soon recognized me, and readily acquainted Monsignor the Bishop of my real profession, who thought himself justified in exciting a persecution against me, and of representing me as a heretic, and as one excommunicated for having, without proper authority thrown off the Franciscan habit.

There are in the small island of Malta, and another island still smaller attached to it, which is called Gozo, more than 500 priests, averaging on the whole, one priest to every 150 inhabitants. It may be supposed then, that people so well supplied with pastors, should be also well instructed in the doctrines of Christianity. Quite the contrary, however, is the case, for very few, indeed not one in a hundred of this crowded population knows how to read and write, and as for understanding the leading points of Christianity, the greater number of the priests themselves do not understand farther of them than reciting a few prayers in a language, of which they are as ignorant as they are of every polite accomplishment—I mean, of the Latin language—for there are not ten priests in the island, who can be said to perfectly understand it. How then could they teach their flock, what they do not understand themselves? unless indeed it is not necessary for a teacher to understand what he teaches. The people know very well how to mumble over in barbarous Latin (a hodge-podge, of Maltese, Italian and Latin, which is incomprehensible as well to the scholar as to those that mutter it) *Pater nosters* and *Ave Maria's* before the images of the Virgin and other saints, to go and prostrate themselves to obtain remission of their sins at the feet of some clownish priest, to attend at the idolatrous ceremony of the mass, and throw themselves on their knees before a

consecrated wafer and worship it as their God ! If this be Christianity, I must confess, that they are excellent Christians ; and their pastors, faithful and Christian ministers ; for they take no small pains to teach the people to be conversant and skilled in things of this kind. But if these things, so far from being Christianity, can with more propriety be called by their true name anti Christianity, what then must we think of a church, which thus leads so many immortal souls headlong into the gulf of error and perdition, by teaching for the doctrines of Christ, the doctrines of anti-Christ, and pointing out as the road to salvation, the road to perdition and death.

Very few of this benighted people thus led astray by the teaching of those, who are set over them for guides, have any suspicion, for they are too ignorant, of the monstrous errors, which they are taught to regard as the Christian faith: they place infinite trust in their priests, and implicitly obey their every command. These, again, are subservient to the bishop, who, in turn, depends upon the court of Rome; so that the pope may be said to have the whole government of the ecclesiastical affairs of the island directly in his own hands. It must not be supposed, that every bishop, who governs the island of Malta in the name of the pope, is in reality sincerely attached to him or his religion: the contrary is very often the case. Caruana, the present bishop, is supposed by a great many, to be a confirmed Deist, and to yield implicit obedience to the court of Rome, *only* through fear of being deposed, and of losing thereby his princely income. He well knows, that were he to act otherwise, English protection, if granted to him, would not be sufficient to keep him in his see, contrary to the endeavours and chicanery of the Roman court, which, in a short time, and for the trouble of issuing the sentence of *suspension*,



would have the entire clergy, with few exceptions, and with them the people on its side, as executioners of its mandate. The bishop therefore is obliged to keep himself quiet, and show himself even zealous in enforcing by words and example the doctrines of Rome, and in revetting more and more the chains, by which the people are kept in subjection to her soul-destroying superstitions. Some few Maltese there are, whose better judgments and more enlightened minds, would excite them to cast off the galling shackles of popery; but they fear the *monstrum horrendum*, the people, and the persecution, which they may be sure to meet with, on its being known, that they had taken such a step. The prospects in life also of those, who depend for support on the emoluments flowing from their professions would be materially injured. If there be any superiority of mind, and feelings among this degraded people, degraded through the blighting influence of popery, this superiority must be looked for among the physicians, surgeons, advocates, attorneys, and other professional men. But these, for the most part, depend for subsistence on their profession; if then they should decline in the public estimation, their practise in their professions would be materially injured. They, therefore, whatever be their real opinions, are obliged to conform themselves to the reigning superstitions, for they are well aware of the priests' power, in exciting the popular feelings, and of the consequence of their being proclaimed heretics by these enemies of all true religion.

One Maltese gentleman in particular—an attorney of great practice, with whom I was on terms of intimacy—upon having received some cause of uneasiness from the meddling of priests in his private concerns, exclaimed one day in my presence, whilst on a visit to him; “that he hoped to see the day, that the last King would be strangled with the en-

trails of the last priest.” It may be supposed, that he had received some unusual provocation, before he could be excited to make use of such strong, and indeed, not very becoming language, which, by the way, he borrowed from the French revolutionists of ’89. What his provocation, at that time, was, I am not aware, but I know, that he suffered not a little in his character and practice through suspicions of heterodoxy cast upon him by the popish priests; nor did he take much pains to prove false such suspicions, for, though in the transactions of business, and in his private character, he exhibited himself a strictly honest, and honourable man, yet he never, as far as I could learn, went to either mass, church, or meeting; or to any place, appointed for divine worship. He had, however, a Deodati’s bible in his possession, and was accustomed to read it frequently, for the beauty of the language, he said himself;) for the instruction, and consolation, which the divine word imparts, I was inclined to suspect, rather.—Be his motives for reading it what they may, I always was of opinion, that he was a zealous, though a hidden favourer of the Christianity, which it teaches, and an enemy of the corrupt Christianity of Rome, however he may restrain himself, through prudential motives, from manifesting that enmity.

Another Maltese, a physician by the name of *Naudi* and professor in the medical college of Malta,\*

\* Malta has also its medical college, instituted, *Diis iratis*, for the destruction of the poor Levantines; as from it are sent forth the host of ignorant quacks, with not even a superficial knowledge of medicine or surgery, but who are nevertheless diplomated, and graduated in this *so called* medical university and then scatter themselves through all Turkey, and Egypt, the harbingers of death and destruction to all, who submit to their unskilful treatment. Nothing can surpass this class of gentry in ignorance and roguery, but their presumption and avarice. The former carries

had privately embraced the reformed religion, and seemed so sincere in his convictions of the errors of popery, and in his love for the doctrines of the Bible, that he was appointed by some English bible-society, its agent in Malta, and granted a yearly salary from the same in consideration of his trouble. He continued for more than two years in this connection with the society, and apparently labouring for it to the best of his abilities, so that the sum, which he received in payment of his trouble, seemed by the managers very profitably laid out; when it was discovered, that he had, almost from the beginning, entered into a private agreement with the superior clergy of Malta to betray the cause he had embarked in, and thwart, instead of advancing its exertions in the cause of Christ. It seems, that soon after his being appointed as an officer of the Bible-society, he had agreed with the bishop to act so in his relations with it, that his efforts would rather tend to the advancement of popery, than to the advantage of the bible-cause. To secure himself against the tongues of his countrymen, who would certainly judge, from his outward activity in distributing bibles, that he was an active agent in the cause of protestantism, he obtained a written document from Monsig. the bishop, by exhibiting which, he could without difficulty stop the mouths of all, who may have taken the liberty to upbraid him for what they termed, his apostacy. He also made a public profession of the Catholic faith in the church of St. Giovanni, and sub-

them through thick and thin with the more honest and less cunning, though perhaps more enlightened Turks; the latter excites them to amass money, no matter how, and by what fraudulent contrivances; with which they return after a few years, (if not cut off before then by the plague,) to their rocky home, to spend it and laugh at the duped Turks.

scribed a paper, in which were contained the various articles of that faith, and more especially such as are protested against by Protestants. This paper, signed by his hand, was lodged in the archives of the said church, to be brought forward, when required. All this time, he was apparently an active agent of the Bible-society, and conversant with the missionaries of Malta: he was the first, in their private meetings, to speak against the superstitions of popery, and the scandalous lives of its ministers, and to encourage them in their endeavours to crush the monster. Every thing that happened in those private meetings was faithfully transmitted by him to the bishop, who could thus better take measures for thwarting them. This imposition at last reached the knowledge of an English missionary, a long time resident on the island, and he thought it his duty to search farther into it. Through an acquaintance, which he formed with one of the Canons of St. Giovanni, he obtained a copy, taken with his own hand, I believe, of the articles of faith signed by the M. D; and despatched it to England to be laid before the society, by which the former was employed; accompanying it with a letter from himself. What was the issue of the inquiry, or how the agent endeavoured to exculpate himself with the society, or whether he attempted any thing like an exculpation, I am not able to say, as I departed from Malta before any thing farther was known on the subject.

The circumstances just related, I have from the lips of the missionary, who discovered the cheat, and who indeed, on other occasions, as well as this, has shown himself faithful to the trust reposed in him by the society under which he labours, and by which he is supported. His zeal in the cause of Christ, and his attempts to expose popery have made him many enemies in the island: indeed I have never yet

heard a Maltese speak well of him, which in itself ought to be a sufficient proof of his courage and fidelity in the cause in which he is engaged; for the Maltese pursue with unremitting rancour all who attempt to serve them by imparting the unadulterated truths of Christianity. In the hypocritical physician, we have an example of a man dead to all sense of honour and religion, who for the sake of filthy gain, throws aside the character of a gentleman, to which his profession and education entitle him, and submits to act the spy and cheat; to act the part of the serpent in the bosom of those, who imprudently entrusted the management of their affairs to his hands. It would be hard to find any other than a Maltese, one, too, bigotedly attached to the doctrines of popery, who would act so base a part. He proved himself indeed, a true *papist*, by his league with the main-spring of popish deception in the island—the bishop, who very probably had part of the plunder; for the pay, received from the Bible-society can be called by no other name.

Malta, besides the herd of secular priests, a sketch of whose lives and manners has been attempted in the foregoing, is also blessed with from ten to twelve convents of lazy monks. The seed of these prolific propagators of error had been imported by the knights, on first gaining possession of the island, in the shape of a few Franciscan and Dominican friars carried about by the knights in the character of chaplains to the order. These soon perceived, that Malta would be a good place for establishing resting places for their brother drones, and accordingly, under the protecting wings of the knights, they set about establishing convents for their respective orders. These convents were at first peopled or rather *monked* from the neighbouring island of Sicily—an island as fa-



mous in modern times for its starving population, and its inexhaustible store of this kind of cattle—from the lordly and proud Benedictine down to the *self-called humble* Paulotist\*—as it was anciently for the wealth of its inhabitants, and the production of warriors, poets and philosophers. The Maltese themselves learned after a little time the happiness of monkery and of living in idleness for the “*love of God.*” Novitiates were then immediately established, and young men presented themselves for admission into the order: and thus was monkery provided with a never failing source for replacing those, whom death may have freed the world of; or whom their own intemperance and gormandizing may have carried to an early grave. Other orders besides the two mentioned above, soon obtained a footing on the island, and brought with them the superstitions peculiar to their different institutes. The Dominicans had already established the rosary of the Virgin Mary, which they feign to have been instituted at the request of *the queen of heaven herself* who had appeared to their founder, St. Dominick†, and had a confab with him on that subject. The Franciscans

\* Monks of the order of St. Francis de Paula, commonly called “*minims*” a name they assumed through humility, and rivalry of those of St. Francis of Assisi, who called themselves “*minor friars.*” A show of humility was the fashion in those days.

† Of all the saints in the popish calendar, this man showed himself, whilst alive, the most cruel, and blood-thirsty. There are, certainly many others enrolled by popes in the catalogue of saints, whose only merit consisted in the quantity of blood which they caused to be shed, while propagating the popish doctrines. If, however, cruelty and hard-heartedness be qualifications essential to a saint, no saint ever canonized deserved that honour better than Dominick, both for his own zeal in burning heretics, and for the establishment of the inquisition, the care of which, like a good father, he left to his no way degenerate children.

had also a care to establish some superstition, instituted through the agency of their Francis; in which they were assisted by other branches of the Franciscan order, afterward established, by the Capuchins and Reformed Cordeliers, or *Zoccolonti*, as the Italians call them. Possessed of this troop of impostors, which was afterward strengthened by the addition of the primitive Carmelites\* so called, and the *Teresian Carmelites*,\* called *Teresians*, the island of Malta soon bid fair to be distinguished among the other Islands of the Mediterranean, as well for the arms of its warlike owners—the knights, as for the protection it afforded to these sowers of false religion, by whom every popish doctrine was established in its most disgusting form; such as saint worship, relic worship, processions, and all the other ceremonies, and rites, with which the pope and his myrmidons have bastardized the legitimate doctrines of Christ.

Having had intimate acquaintance with the greater part of the members composing the convents, and having observed closely their manners and customs, which indeed, are in many respects different from those of their brethren on the continent of Europe, I have come to the conclusion, that they are less enlightened, taken in a body, though more bigoted and more sincere in their attachment to the errors of the church of Rome, than the latter. The stock of information which they possess is very trifling, never exceeding with very

\* Carmelites take their name from Mount Carmel, where they are said to have been first instituted by Elias. They are also called the order of the *Scapular*, from a square piece of cloth, which they carry in their habit, on which is worked the image of the Virgin Mary, whom they worship and honor more than they do her Son. The Teresians are a reformed branch of this order, instituted by Teresa, a Spanish mad-woman, of whom many absurd and lying wonders are related. She was on a *par* in fanaticism with the more modern Johanna Southcote.

few exceptions, a slight knowledge of Latin, and a few useless *distinctions* in *dogmatical* Theology, so metaphysical, and nonsensical, that they learn them, as parrots, by rote ; and he is thought the most learned theologian, who can quote from the Angelic Doctor, Thomas d'Aquinas, or from the Seraphic Doctor, Bonaventure, the greater number of sentences, which, so far from understanding the meaning of, he often does not understand the literal translation of the Latin words, in which they are written.

The Capuchins have a very fine, indeed a splendid convent, outside the walls of Valetta, though not outside the outward fortifications of the city. The place in which it is built is called *Floriana*; for what reason, I am ignorant, unless it be named so in honor of some Grand Master, or some other person connected with the knights of St. John. In this convent, though without lands or any fixed income, there are nevertheless maintained in splendour and luxury more than forty dronish monks, who, in return for the support thus liberally bestowed upon them by an ignorant population, endeavour to corrupt their minds as much as possible with the superstitions of false religion, and turn them away from the only Mediator between God and man. The rosary of the Madonna, the worship of St. Francis, the efficacy of indulgences, and all the other novelties, which popery has ingrafted on the pure stock of Christianity and substituted for the worship of Christ, are preached by them with great zeal, and with more effect too, than flow from the preaching of the other orders ; because the Capuchins are better respected and more esteemed than the latter, by reason of a more imposing exterior, and consequently these pernicious doctrines come with more weight and make a greater impression upon the hearers, when preached by them, than they possibly could, when preached by those

of a less imposing outside, or by those, who take less care to conciliate the affections of the people, as having a fixed income of their own, they are less dependent upon them. The convent of the Floriana is the head convent of the Capuchin order in Malta, and to it are subject two other convents of the same order; one at Città Vittoriosa, and the other in the small island of Gozo. The *Padre Custode*—the name which the superior goes by—resides at the head convent, and to his immediate jurisdiction, independent of the bishop, are subject the whole three. The General of the order, therefore, at Rome has the real government of these convents in his hands; for the Padre Custode can do nothing but what is commanded by the former. The same may be said of the government of the other orders, the local superiors of which are totally independent of the bishop of Malta, and hold their offices direct from their respective Generals at Rome. In this way, is the influence of Rome over the minds and morals of the people maintained, not only in Malta, but in every country where her religion has gained ground.

The present *custode* of the Capuchins of Malta seems to have been chosen to that office for no other reason than his profound ignorance, for truly, he is the most ignorant of the ignorant community which he governs. It would seem that ignorance is meritorious among them; otherwise I cannot imagine what influenced those, upon whose votes the election depended, to think upon, not to say, elect, so asinine a superior. Padre Pietro, (for that is his name,) is so glaringly divested of every qualification for which man gains ascendancy over his fellow, that, laying aside his superstition and bigotry—the never-failing attendants of ignorance—he seems to be by many degrees inferior in his mental

capacities to the illiterate islanders, by whom he is looked up to with a degree of veneration. He had been, for many years, absent from the island as a missionary—what a missionary!—in some of the uncultivated regions of Africa, where the inhabitants speak a language bordering on the *patua*, spoken in Malta. The knowledge of this jargon, which he learned from his cradle, was the only qualification he possessed for a missionary, and for this he was sent by the Propaganda, at Rome, to carry the little he knew of popery, (for he is absolutely too ignorant to know much about it,) to the benighted Africans. On his return he gained consequence among his countrymen, for having been a missionary, and among his brother monks, for having amassed money, filched from the pockets of those who were so unfortunate as to come under the influence of his priest-craft. With this money, it is said, he bought the votes of the other monks, and thereby obtained the office of *custode*, to the rejection of men who were comparatively qualified for such an office. One of those rejected to make room for him—a certain Padre Diomede—was really a superior man for his station, and had his lot been cast in any other sphere of life than that of a monk's, he would have been a useful member of society: as it was, he had nothing of the monk about him but the habit. He died soon after his election was nullified, some say of a broken-heart, brought on by the persecution of the other monks, by whom he was hated for being superior to themselves in every thing which can render one man superior to another.

I have been thus diffuse on the character of this worthless monk, not that I supposed him worth the trouble of bringing his name before the public, but because, taking him on account of the superior office he holds, as a criterion, judgment might be formed of the other Capuchins, who are blessed by his



government. If, then, such is the head, what must the other members be? And what must we think of the venality and meanness of the other monks, who though there are among them some men of superior qualifications, i. e. comparatively so, for "*Beati monoculi in terra cæcorum*," (happy are the one-eyed in the country of the blind)—yet chose rather, either through envy or bribery, to elect for superior this man, very little superior to the brute creation in intellect, and nothing at all, to the priests of Juggernaut in religion, if, indeed, the superiority does not rest with the latter.

There is also living at the convent of the Floriana another monk, who has rendered himself conspicuous, though in a different way from the former; for as Padre Pietro is remarkable for his ignorance, his bigotry, and his rank of superior, so also is Padre Calcedonio, whom we are about to introduce to the reader's acquaintance, equally remarkable for his crimes and scandalous life. If any one of those, into whose hands this book falls, has ever been in the island of Malta, he cannot but have observed, walking through *Strada Reale*, a Capuchin monk, of a mortified exterior, tall in stature, and of a prominent belly, having his eyes armed with a pair of spectacles, for he pretends to be near-sighted. If he had observed him, and then asked the smallest child of Malta "Who is that Padre?" the child, in wonder at his not knowing what every one knows, will exclaim "Oh! that is Padre Calcedonio, the Capuchin saint; and *you* must be a stranger in Malta not to know him." Of this Padre Calcedonio, the Capuchin saint, the history may not be entirely uninteresting to the reader, for whose gratification it is here inserted. It is no secret in Malta, not even to the very persons who esteem the subject of it a saint; so much easier is it to pass for a saint than for an honest and virtuous man, and so inclined is a

priest-ridden people to pass over the defects, and crimes, of its spiritual teachers.

This Padre Calcedonio was sent, about twelve years ago, by the superior of the Capuchins of Malta, to the island of Santa Maura, one of the Ionian islands, in the capacity of chaplain to the Sicilian, and Corsican soldiers, in the English service, by whom the garrison was manned. On these troops being disbanded, he continued in the same relation to the Sicilian and Maltese civilians, who considered that island a good place for establishing manufactories, and exercising their various professions. His insinuating manners, and sanctimonious exterior, gained him the affections of these people, and he grew into great repute among them. Being the only Roman Catholic priest on the island; for the Greek church is that followed by the natives, he was esteemed the more, as the people following the Latin church would feel severely the want of a minister of their own persuasion, if he should be withdrawn, or should take offence at their treatment, and return to his convent at Malta. He was on this account liberally supported by them, and almost idolized: indeed, his general conduct was irreprehensible; so much so, that when a Greek woman accused him of attempting the seduction of her daughter, who washed for him, little was wanting, that she was not torn asunder by the infuriated Latins, who considered her charge as a calumny invented by the Greek priests to cast odium on the Latin church, by accusing its minister of incontinency. The sequel, however, proved the justice of the woman's charge. Among the Latins, who lived on the island, there was a Sicilian mechanic, who, by industry, and attendance to his business, was acquiring an honest competency. He also had a little trade with his native island, Sicily, in sending

some of the products of Santa Maura there, and receiving, in return, clothes, cotton, stockings, &c. With this man, Padre Calcedonio had a very great intimacy; indeed it was shrewdly suspected, that the former was trafficking with the Padre's money, for to his other good qualifications, Padre Calcedonio added that of insatiable avarice, and as it would be unseemly for him, a missionary, to enter on commercial pursuits in his own name, to avoid the tongues of the people, he commissioned his friend, the Sicilian, to act for him. Be this as it may, it is certain that a close intimacy existed between them, and they were frequent visitors and guests at the houses of each other.

The *Padre* had a neat little house expressly built for him close to the church, so that he had very little trouble to be always present, when his ministry was wanted. To this house the Sicilian and his family were accustomed to come on visits of ceremony, and spend their evenings in its owner's company. It happened one day, that the Sicilian sent one of his daughters, a child about twelve years of age, to the Padre's house, for something that the latter had promised to give him. She was received with the greatest kindness by the monk, and given some refreshment of sweet cakes and wine, for he was well known for his attachment to children, and was accustomed to carry something sweet in his pocket to bestow upon them, when he visited at their parents' houses: it was not suspected, however, that he could possibly harbour, for one moment, the diabolical designs which he manifested on the present occasion. Having made the child drink wine, nearly to intoxication, he took her in his arms, and conveyed her into his bed-room, and there satisfied his brutal passion. Had he foreseen the consequence of his crime, however, it is most probable that he would

not have hazarded the attempt. The child being of a tender age, bled profusely, and was heard crying bitterly, when the door was forced in, and my hero was discovered endeavouring to stop the bleeding, and stuffing the child's mouth with sweet cakes to hinder her from crying. A physician was sent for, and on examining the child, he immediately discovered that she had been violated, and expressed a doubt of her recovery from the injury received. Whilst using the necessary means for stopping the blood, the poor child fainted, and it was believed by those present, (one of whom, a Maltese ship-master, of the name of Elul, who had just come to Santa Maura that very day, related the circumstances to me,) that she had expired. Our gallant Padre was immediately taken into custody, and well for himself that he was, because, had he not been protected by those who took him prisoner, he would not be alive to-day to act the saint through the streets of Malta, for the people, both Greek and Latin, would have torn him in twain. The poor child, the victim of his lust, after recovering from the swoon, gathered strength enough to be able to tell her parents what the wretch had done to her, and then sunk into her former stupor. Her life was despaired of for many weeks. The physician, after further examination, discovered that she had also been infected, by her ravisher, with a loathsome, unnameable disease—a sure sign that the Padre had not lived, hitherto, in that continency, for which his friends gave him credit; attributing to calumny the report of those who knew how he really lived, and especially the charge made against him by the Greek woman, which has already been spoken of.

Being brought before the tribunal at Zante, whither he was transferred for trial, he made no defence, but simply said, that he was innocent, and the

victim of a conspiracy entered into against him by the libertines of Santa Maura, for his destruction. His guilt was proved by the evidence of the child herself, and of the physician who examined her, and corroborated by the testimony of some of those, who, attracted by the child's screams, broke open the door of his house, and found him endeavouring to stop the blood, as has been already related. He was sentenced by the court to four years hard labour, among the felons of Santa Maura, with a chain to his leg, as is the custom with those whom they call *galliotti*, or those condemned to the galleys—a very lenient sentence, if his crime be taken into consideration; for, had he committed the same crime in England, he would certainly have been punished by death. He passed through four months of his sentence, and was remarked by his jailors for the most indecent, hardened conduct, during that time. He could be seen divested of his habit, and dressed as a convict, sweeping the streets of Santa Maura, till General Rivarola, a Corsican in the English service, used his influence with the government to obtain a remission of his sentence, not so much for the sake of the wretch himself, as for the Roman Catholic religion, of which he was a minister, and to which the general was, and is, very much attached. Through his endeavours, he was discharged, and sent to Malta, where, in a short time, he again grew devout, and denied his guilt. His insinuating address, and plausible story, made many suppose that he was really the victim of injustice; and even his own superior was the first to write to the Capuchin general, in Rome, to have him re-instated in his former dignity, and restored to all the honours of the priesthood. He is now in Malta, practising his wonted impositions, and esteemed as a saint by the greater part of the people. Whether his bad suc-



cess at Santa Maura has cured him of his propensities to certain failings, I am unable to judge, though it is very probable, as he is not yet very old, that that discovery and exposure have only taught him more prudence, and not more continence, and that, when he chooses to indulge in his illicit gratifications, he will take very good care not to indulge in them at the expense of a child of twelve years old.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

Continuation of remarks upon the Popish Clergy of Malta—Their general incontinency—Father Butler, chaplain to the English forces at Malta—Meaning of the initials “D. D.” affixed to his name—His *mania* for making proselytes—Sample of Popish Conversions—A Protestant converted to Popery after death—Another sample of Father Butler’s way of making Proselytes—Father Butler appears in a new character—Sir Dominick Ritual, and Sir Paul Text-book—Sir Dominick disgraces his Knight-hood—Concluding remarks on Popery in Malta.

THERE are many other monks at Malta, both of the Capuchin and other orders, noted for crimes, not indeed of so deep a dye as the one just related, or such as would bring them under the cognizance of the secular arm, but yet quite unbecoming their profession, and their station in life. Incontinency is so common among them that transgressions of that nature are very little noticed; being passed over as every day’s occurrences. This I wish to be understood of the priests of Malta, and those of the Ionian islands, alone; for in other countries, except Ireland, things of that kind are less frequent, either because severely punished,

when discovered, or perhaps, because less known, as the punishment inflicted upon those who are discovered, has the effect of making others more cautious in their actions, and when they do transgress, to transgress so privately that their transgressions never come to light.

Before I quit Malta, I must say a few words of the popish chaplain of the English forces, who deserves a place among the other clergy of this island, if for nothing else, at least for his desire of brutalizing the minds of the unfortunate Irish soldiers, who fall under the influence of his ministry.

This *champion* of popery, as he wishes to be thought, but unfortunately he wants both the talents and qualifications to be a successful one, is a native of some part of the county of Limerick, Ireland. His name is Butler. He studied at Rome, under the tuition of the worthy sons of St. Dominick, whose order he embraced. After nominally passing through a course of dogmatical and moral theology, he was sent to Malta in the character of chaplain to the English forces in that island. He lived for some time at the Dominican convent among his fellow-monks, till having incurred the displeasure of the Maltese superior, for something which was not considered meet in his conduct—and it must have been something extraordinary to provoke the censure of a superior so latitudinarian in morality as the Dominican superior in Malta—he thought it prudent to supplicate the court of Rome for leave to separate from the order altogether, and live as a secular priest. This leave he obtained, though not without some difficulty; for monks are not over-fond of letting go the hold which they once have taken of the soul and body of another; and he now lives in private lodgings, at Malta, under the title of the *Rev. T. Butler, D. D.*—the last two letters meaning, I presume, “*drunken Dominican*,” for he

certainly deserves this title better than that of "doctor of divinity," as his very great ignorance shows him to have no claim whatever to the latter, whereas the tippling propensities, for which he is remarkable, (and for which, perhaps, he provoked the reproof from his Dominican superior, that excited him to leave the order,) establish his right to the *former* title.\*

The ruling passion of this man, next to indulging in the use of intoxicating drinks, seems to be the converting, or rather perverting to the *holy, Roman, Catholic* faith—*what high sounding adjectives to a substantive without a substance*—the weak protestants attached to the army; those whose early education was neglected, and who are protestants only in name, without the slightest knowledge of the vital truths of protestantism. People of this class being dazzled with the gaudy trappings, and theatrical pageantry of popery, become an easy prey to the Jesuitical manœuvres of the Maltese priests, and more especially, to the endeavours of Butler, who lets slip no opportunity of making proselytes, not so much through any love he holds to Christianity, for his scandalous life proclaims him an infidel, as for the sake of gaining credit for himself by their conversion. He makes it his boast that during the five years he has been chaplain in Malta, he had the honour of making six converts, partly men and partly women, and all of the lower class of English attached to the army. In illustration of the

\* Justice obliges me to add, that the Maltese clergy, among the mass of vices for which they are distinguished, have one good quality—that of detesting intoxication. I do not know one single individual among them who has ever been found guilty of drunkenness, in public at least, or in private either, I am inclined to think. They refrain constitutionally from excess in intoxicating drinks. The appearance of Butler amongst them, and of another English—not *Irish*—priest, since dead, very much scandalized them.

manner in which this hero carries on his proselytizing system, the following example will not be thought wholly irrelevant.

An English protestant, of the name of Muller, long time a resident in Malta, where he was employed in the civil government, had from his infancy lived without God, and had nothing of the protestant about him, but the name, which he acquired from his parents being of that denomination. Being seized with a lingering illness, the bed of sickness brought forcibly to his mind his ill-spent life, and his neglect of God and religion, whilst in the enjoyment of health. Feeling his end fast approaching, he sent for the protestant chaplain of the forces, a Mr. Misurier, and begged him to pray with him, and to lay open the hopes that a dying sinner can lay-hold on for obtaining happiness in the next world. Mr. Misurier found the unfortunate man totally ignorant of the first principles of Christianity, and had to explain to him, as to an infant, every thing relating to the Christian religion; such as the love of God to mankind, who sent down his only-begotten Son, to be offered up as a sacrifice to his offended Majesty for their sins, and other things of this kind. He had never read the Bible in his life, and ignorance made him doubt of all religions. With some difficulty, and great perseverance, (for his sickness was a long one, of more than three months' continuance,) Mesurier brought him to understand, and believe in some of the most essential articles of revelation, and had him fully prepared and reconciled to depart from this world, trusting, and relying, on the merits of his Redeemer for salvation. In this state of mind, the man expired in the presence of Mr. Mesurier. The deceased had a sister living with him, who took care of his household concerns,

(for he was never married;) one that was as ignorant as himself of vital religion. This, her ignorance, made her an easy prey to the Maltese priests; and she had, some time before her brother's illness, and without his knowledge, renounced the *errors* of protestantism, as the doctrines of the Bible are called by papists, in the hands of father Butler.

During her brother's illness, she often attempted to have his permission to bring that priest to see him; but he always refused; being unwilling to have his last moments disturbed by the presence of one, who, he well knew, putting religion out of the question, showed no very good example to his followers. The breath however had no sooner left his body, and the protestant clergyman departed, than away she runs for Father Butler, as it had already been agreed upon between them. The latter arrives at the dead man's late residence out of breath with haste, and pulling out his oil-horn, he sets about greasing the inanimate corpse, and going through the other ceremonies practised at the administration of extreme-unction. This being finished, the sister then began to wail, and externate her grief for her brother's death in a thousand ridiculous ways, chiefly for the sake of attracting the notice of the neighbors, who were yet ignorant of his demise. These assembled to condole with the bereaved sister, and finding Father Butler in the house, and the body of the deceased still wet from the oil, with which it was besmeared, they immediately gave out, that Muller had died a Roman Catholic through the pious exertions of Father Butler, whose fame for having drawn his soul from the jaws of hell, to which the Maltese charitably consign all who die protestants, resounded in the mouths of all. The dead body was borne by the people in triumph to the nearest church, and placed on a bier, designed for that purpose in the



middle of the aisle, where it was surrounded by wax-candles, while masses were celebrated for the repose of the soul, which formerly resided in it.

This was a day of triumph to the priests of Malta. They little cared about the truth of the conversion, or the sanctity of the subject of it: all they wanted was the name, and that they acquired by the arts already related. The Protestant chaplain, who knew, how affairs stood, and who saw the man expire in his own presence, told his friends, and those who would listen to him, the whole truth; but it would be no easy matter to make the Maltese think themselves deceived, or make them aware of the cheat practised on their credulity. Conscious of having done his duty, and the press being restricted by the policy of the government, Mesurier was obliged to let the thing drop, and thus pass over in silence as great a violation of truth and honesty as ever shone forth in the annals of popish fiction. The occurrence was published in some of the English papers, and sent out to Malta; but the Maltese loved to be deceived, and they, to this day, believe in the possibility of a protestant becoming reconciled to popery, even after death; for such must be the view, the worthy actor in the affair, Butler, had taken of it, in order to reconcile to his conscience the sanctioning of such a falsehood; if indeed the man be troubled with any such thing as a conscience.

This, I believe, was Father Butler's first attempt at making converts. I shall relate another, and then be done with him.

An English woman, who was engaged as a servant, in an American merchant's house at Smyrna, Asia Minor, related the following story of her conversion to Popery by the instrumentality of our Irish hero, Father Butler. The 94th Regiment of infantry passing through Gosport, prior

to its embarkation for Gibraltar, she unfortunately became acquainted with an Irish Sergeant of that regiment in this, her native town; and contrary to the advice of her parents and friends was married to him. His first care, after marriage, was to endeavour to convert her, his wife, from her own religion to popery. This he at first attempted by fair means, and gentleness, but finding these of no avail, he had recourse to violent measures and even stripes. On the regiment's being ordered to Gibraltar, he immediately brought her under the notice of a Spanish priest, who acts as chaplain to the British Roman Catholic soldiers of that garrison. The poor woman was a long time pestered with this man's arguments. The only thing she had to plead in excuse for not being immediately converted, and in order to deprecate the anger of her husband, was her being unable to understand his barbarous English. This plea served her but little, for her husband's ill treatment grew worse daily at her obstinacy; as he was pleased to call her attachment to the religion of her childhood; indeed the poor creature, having been blessed with a religious education, and being able to render an account *of the hope in her*, had no inclination whatever to change it for a religion she justly thought erroneous. After the regiment's removal to Malta, she came into the fangs of our hero, father Butler, and even then, though she could not plead in excuse, the not understanding his language; though indeed his English is not the most Johnsonian, nor his pronunciation quite in accordance with the rules laid down by Walker, yet she persisted in adhering to the religion of the Bible. The Father's patience was worn out in catechising her, and her husband's in beating her, before she consented to deny her religion; and it is remarkable, that her husband grew more cruel, and more morose

towards her since her removal to Malta, which she attributed to the fatherly advice of Father Butler. The latter one day told her in English plain enough, and which she could not misunderstand, "that unless she made up her mind to embrace the Roman Catholic Religion by a certain time" (fixing one or two weeks from the time of his speaking) "that she may give up all hopes of ever living in peace with her husband." The poor woman thus combatted on all sides, and having no one to recur to, for she feared her husband's anger, if she went to a protestant clergyman, at last yielded, and added one more to the number of Butler's converts. She publicly renounced protestantism at the Jesuit's church, which is now given up entirely to the use of the English soldiers, amid the applauses, and clamours of the bigoted popish soldiers and others, who were present on the occasion. She nearly fainted at the foot of the altar, whither she went to receive the Eucharist, after pronouncing the words of renunciation; her conscience probably smiting her for acting contrary to its dictates. All things considered, she showed herself a heroine, and deserved a better fate than to be joined to a bigoted papist. The wonder is, that she held out so long, rather than, that she yielded in the end. Her husband not long after her pseudo-conversion being reduced to the ranks for some misdemeanor, gave himself up to drunkenness and debauchery, as much as a man under military discipline could, and in the end, fell a victim to the climate and his own intemperance. She was after this thrown on the world in a strange country, but God opened a way for her. She was hired by the American gentleman, spoken of above, who was in Malta on business, in whose house at Smyrna she now lives, and to whom she related the story of her forced conversion, as the

reader has just heard it. She has returned to her former creed, and gives evident signs of being a pious and faithful Christian. From the two foregoing examples, the reader may learn, of what kind, popish conversions are in general, and what these are in particular, caused by the operations of the Hiberno-Maltese hero. If the circumstances attending the conversions of the others, whom he has placed on his list of proselytes, were examined, it is probable, nay, it is certain, that they would be found on a par with the specimens we have given: each and every one of them the effect either of imposition, deception, force, or ignorance.

This illiterate monk had also the impudence to enter into a doctrinal controversy with a protestant missionary at Malta, of the name of Wilson—the same with him, that discovered, and made public the knavery of Doctor Naudi, as already related. The subject chosen was the “rule of faith,”—a subject he knows as much about as his sanctified founder Dominick did of pure Christianity. He had, nevertheless, the presumption to open the controversy by a letter of five or six pages, addressed to Mr. Wilson, wherein he endeavoured to bring forward in his own uncouth language the hackneyed arguments of popish theologians in favour of the Romanist’s rule of faith—the church, the Pope, and tradition, *versus* the Protestant’s—the Bible alone. These arguments so often confuted, he endeavoured to revive, and bring forward, as his own, for the purpose of distinguishing himself among his fellow-priests. Though Mr. Wilson saw from the beginning into his real motives, and judged him immediately an adversary of little capability, and unable, on account of his natural stupidity and neglected education, to maintain by any original arguments the ground he had taken; yet hoping that it might be the means of

opening the eyes of some benighted follower of popery, he did not disdain the weakness of his adversary, or refuse to accept his challenge. In answer to his interpolations of old schoolmen, he published a very neat little book, entitled "The Knights of the Hermitage, or an account of a fearful, and bloody engagement, between Sir Dominick Ritual and Sir Paul Text-book" This book is written in a serio-comic style: by the two Knights are meant the popish ritual, under the name of Sir Dominick Ritual; and the Bible, under that of Sir Paul Text-book. Mr. Wilson puts arguments in the mouth of his adversary, which no one that ever knew Padre Butler would suppose him! guilty of using, so far are they above his understanding; yet his adversary, to make up for what he wants in talents, generously supplies him with the arguments, which he probably would use, if he were a man of learning; and then refutes them—in other words, he supplies him with weapons, and then fights him. And what return did he make so generous an enemy? Did he answer him? He did, but in a summary way, for he attempted to summon him to the court! He wanted to construe into a libel some expression, which Wilson used in the course of argument, and was determined to make it the subject of a prosecution. The book was printed in England, and though addressed to Butler, was designed for the use of all, who might take a fancy to read it. Explaining in a note a certain passage, wherein mention is made of Butler's name, and which would appear obscure to the general reader, unacquainted with the cause of the controversy, the author says "that he (Butler) is now vegetating among the self-denying Dominicans of Malta, and had recently stolen on the last moments of a dying protestant (Muller, whose history has been given above, I suppose, he means) to try to have the hon-



our of converting him to popery." The valorous Knight, Sir Dominick, being unable to face his gallant adversary in single combat, and on equal terms, attempted to call to his assistance his auxiliaries, the lawyers and bailiffs of Malta, in order to be revenged for his signal defeat: not considering at the same time, that such a step would dishonour him in the eyes of all honest Knights, because contrary to the established laws of single combat. I dare say, his signal defeat has taught him to consider well the strength of his adversaries, prior to engaging them, and, however his presumption may excite him to enter the lists against those superior to him in prowess, leaving out of the question the justice of their cause, to hide himself in future, under the protecting wings of his own nothingness. But I have taken up more time in speaking of this curious compound of ignorance and presumption than I at first intended, not thinking the man worth the trouble of many remarks. It is not, however, he I intended to portray, but I have taken his person, and the rank he holds of chaplain to Irish soldiers in Malta, as a criterion, by which to judge of the general conduct and endowments of popish priests, wherever they are to be found; of their roguery, their impositions, their manner of making converts; in fine of the fruits of the religion, of which they are the ministers, and which fruits, were they less bitter, would be a greater subject for wonder, considering the tree on which they grew, than that they are in actual conformity with the nature of their parent-branch; though indeed the latter is no wonder at all.

## CHAPTER XXX.

Rev. Mr. Lowndes, Protestant Missionary—Greek Priests at Corfu—State of Religion at Corfu—Popish Clergy and Archbishop—Conversation with the Popish Archbishop—His attempt to wheedle me again into Popery—My Answer—Persecution by the Popish Priests, and its effect—Zante—Popish Priests at Zante—Mr. Croggon, the Wesleyan Missionary—Letter from Smyrna to Mr. Lowndes—The Popish Priests attempt to poison me—Effects of the poison—Departure from Zante—Arrival at Smyrna—Conclusion.

AFTER residing some months in Malta, I embarked on board a Maltese vessel for Corfu; which island I reached after a pleasant voyage of ten days. I had letters of recommendation to some of the English residents there, and through their interest, was soon in possession of a good income, derived from teaching Italian, Latin, and English. I kept myself, as much as possible, separate from the priests of the island, fearing, that their machinations and influence might be of injury to me, if they came to the knowledge of my former profession. I formed a very close friendship with a truly evangelical missionary, the Rev. Mr. Lowndes, a long time residing on the island, to which he has been the means of rendering very great services, by establishing schools, and instructing the people in the life-giving truths of the Gospel. To that pious and Christian man I am very much indebted. From him I first learned what Christianity really is. Though I made no secret of my Socinian views on religious matters, he yet endeavoured, not by persecution, and annoyance—the method practised by those I met at London—but by argument, and a candid perusal of

the sacred volume, to convince me of my errors; and I must certainly have been infatuated, not to be persuaded. Persuaded, however, I was not, at that time, nor for a long time afterward. Indeed, it required the hand of God, and grace from above, to accomplish so great a work. Mr. Lowndes was also of very great service to me in a temporal point of view. He obtained for me many tuitions in the Greek families, and were it not for popish persecution, which broke out as soon as ever the priests discovered, (by what means I am to this day ignorant,) my former profession, I would have remained at Corfu all my life.

I have already, in a former part of this work, given a sketch of the state of religion at Corfu. The idol Spiridione is the god of the island, and from him are expected all the blessings, spiritual and temporal, which its inhabitants pray for. The Greek priests are proverbially ignorant and illiterate; and, consequently, bigoted in the extreme to their own superstitious form of worship. Their supine ignorance is so well known, that the Latin inhabitants, when they wish to express a more than usual degree of that *mother of devotion*, say of one of their acquaintances, “Egli è piu ignorante, che un papa Greco.” (He is more ignorant than a Greek priest.) The greater part of the educated Corfuotes are naturalists. They do not believe in Christianity under any form. Their religion is that of nature, and they take no pains to hide that belief. Some of them, unable to bear the pangs of skepticism, flee for relief to the only place it can be found—to the Book of Life. Mr. Lowndes has pointed out to me a few of the principal inhabitants, who were really pious, and scriptural Christians. These were at first, infidels, and owe their conversion, next to God, to the pastoral care of that gentleman.

The Latin clergy are comparatively more enlightened than the Greek. This is chiefly owing to their having received their education at Rome, or Bologna. But what they gain in knowledge, they lose in morality, for they are by many degrees, inferior to the Greek clergy on this point. The greater part of the latter have wives and families. The Greek priests, who have not, are as remarkable for their scandalous, and immoral lives, as the Latin priests themselves—a striking example of the effects of celibacy.

There are in Corfu four popish churches, governed by an archbishop, who is nominated by the court of Rome, and paid by the Ionian government. The popish bishop who was in possession of that see, in my time, held, as far as I could learn, the character of a pious and good man, that is, as far as piety and goodness can form the ingredients of a popish prelate, of one, who must be either a fool, or an impostor, in order to come up to the letter of his title. When it was discovered, that I was a Roman Catholic clergyman, just escaped from monastic bondage, the archbishop immediately sent for me to his house. I thought it prudent to go to him. He inquired whether what he had heard from good authority concerning me was the truth? whether I had been a Capuchin friar? I answered in the affirmative. He then told me, “that he was a long time wishing for an Irish priest to take charge of *the souls* (*his own words*) of the British Roman Catholic soldiers, who were quartered in the island, and that if I wished to unite myself again to the *Holy Roman Catholic Church*, he would give me that chaplaincy, with a fixed salary.” He then entered into a long, theological discussion, or rather, lecture, (for he was the only speaker) on the truth and infallibility of the church of Rome, on the dangers of

heresy, and on the miserable death of the heresiarchs. He endeavoured to bring before me the dangerous state of my own soul, if I should be taken off by the hand of death, whilst living in enmity with the church, and therefore (he added *logically* enough) with God. To all this I turned a deaf ear. I told him plainly, "that my escape from popery was not the effect of whim, or caprice, but of a firm conviction of the fallacy of that system of religion; and that, though I had not embraced *as yet* any other form of Christian worship, I would, nevertheless, rather trust to the religion of nature for the salvation of my soul, than to the erroneous and absurd doctrines of popery." I even added, when he urged his arguments on the infallibility of his church, and when he endeavoured to prove from some saying of Augustine to be found—the Lord knows where,\* that the Scriptures themselves were based on that infallibility which I deny, "that were the Scriptures based on no better authority than that of the pope, and of his church, this night I would sleep a disciple of Voltaire."

My interview with the archbishop of Corfu passed over in this way, and we separated, mutually dissatisfied with each other. I very soon, however, found the effects, which his anger had upon my emoluments, and my means of subsistence. He

\*A hackneyed quotation from St. Augustin, or at least, one fathered upon that saint, is in great vogue with popish disputants. "*Ne quidem ipsis scripturis crederem, nisi auctoritas Romanæ ecclesiæ me ad id excitaret*". (Not even the Scriptures themselves would I believe, unless the authority of the Roman Church moved me thereto) is in the mouth of every popish school-boy. I wish their teachers would teach these boys, that it is a sophism,—what the logicians call "*circulus vitiosus*" to prove one thing by another; to prove the truth of the church from the Scriptures, and then the truth of the Scriptures themselves, from the church,



could not openly do me any injury, or cause it to be done to me, for he knew, that he was not living under popish government, and that Lord Nugent, the High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands would not permit him to touch my person. Had I been in any Italian city, and expressed myself in the way related, I would not long have enjoyed the light of heaven. Being unable then, to avenge himself by personal violence, he resolved to starve me into a compliance with his wishes. He excited, or rather commanded his cursed priests to denounce me from their altars and pulpits. He himself used his influence with those families, whose children I was instructing, to withdraw them from me. In fine, I found myself, after five months' residence at Corfu, without the means of subsistence, on account of the machinations, and through the influence of the popish priests—as cursed a set of bigoted, unchristian men, as ever devoted themselves to the propagation of the soul-destroying tenets of popery ; or as ever bowed their knee to the *beast*—the *great idol* of the western churches, who “sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself as God.”

Finding myself fast sinking into a state of abject poverty, and unable to stem the torrent of persecution, in which the priests were endeavouring to overwhelm me, I resolved to leave Corfu, and go to Zante, where I hoped to be less exposed to popish rancour. Zante is one of the seven Ionian islands under British protection. The greater part of its inhabitants follow the Greek rite. There are, however, followers of the pope there, also—the remnant of old Venetian families, and the descendants of Maltese emigrants. There are, I believe about fourteen popish priests in the Island. These are governed by a bishop, (whom I never saw) who is subject to the archbishop of Corfu. Were the most

infamous brothels of London and Paris to be searched, there could not be found in them fourteen ruffians to match the fourteen priests of Zante, in ruffianism, infamy, and debauchery. The priests of Corfu, nay, even those of Malta, are angels, when compared with them. Each of them publicly keeps a concubine for his own individual use, besides now, and then, leaving her to pine alone, for the more welcome embraces of some fair penitent. Their whole time is spent in a coffee house, situated in the principal square, called "Piazza San Marco." In this coffee house, they might be seen in *fours*, *sixes*, or *tens*, gaming, drinking, and carousing; not once, nor ten times, but so constantly, as to acquire for the house the name of "*caff  dei preti*," or the priests' coffee house. The house itself has become so infamous through their frequenting it, that no respectable inhabitant of the Island would be seen entering it. It is therefore frequented by idlers, and loungers alone; by those who earn a subsistence by scheming and impositions—all fit companions for these adepts in scheming and imposture—the priests.

The Greek priests of Zante are for the most part married men. They have a greater show of decorum in their general conduct, than the popish priests; and some of them really are, judging at least from outward appearances, seriously impressed with the important duties of their calling. If there be any tincture of Christianity at all, in the island, it must be looked for among some few of the Greek priests, though, to be sure, nearly stifled by the superstitions, for which the Greek as well as the popish church, is remarkable. There is also a Wesleyan Methodist Missionary of the name of Croggon, residing in the island, but his influence is very small. Indeed, I believe, he has no influence at all, for he is not well

liked, being quite unfit for a missionary. At least, for the short acquaintance I had with him, I was never able to discover any of the qualifications, which induced the Wesleyan Missionary Society to send him to Zante; and not one of those, who had any intimate acquaintance with him, did I ever hear speak of him, as a man worthy of being respected, or as desirous of ameliorating the moral or intellectual condition of the people. He was ignorant of every language, but English. Greek, he attempted to smatter, but scarcely made himself intelligible. It may, then, naturally be expected, that the blessed doctrines of the reformation made but little progress, when taught by so very unskillful a teacher.

Having consulted with my friend Mr. Lowndes, and laid open to him the state to which I was driven by the persecutions of the Corfu priests, he advised me to go to Zante, giving me at the same time a letter of introduction to Mr. Croggon, the only person he knew residing there. Zante being but a short distance from Corfu—less than twenty four hours' sail—I arrived there the day after my departure from Corfu. What happened after my arrival, and why I left it after a very short stay, will be best learned from a letter I wrote from Smyrna to the Rev. Mr. Lowndes at Corfu. I find the copy of it among my other papers, and shall transcribe it word for word. It will show, of what popery is capable now-a-days, as well as formerly, and that the diabolical principle "the end justifies the means," is still practised in every place, where popery prevails. I myself am a living example of the truth of this assertion, having barely escaped with life from the poisonous cup presented by the hands of a popish priest, as will be seen by those, who take the trouble to read the following letter.

*Smyrna, 20th December, 1834.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR:

Gratitude for the many favors received from your hands, united to an ardent wish of returning my heart-felt thanks, makes me embrace the present opportunity of writing by a ship, about to depart from this port for Malta, whence I hope, this letter will find its way to you. You will surely be surprised to hear, that I am at Smyrna, and will wonder, what induced me to proceed there? Have patience, dear Sir, and I shall tell you all, *the how, the when* and the *wherefore*.

You may, perhaps, remember, indeed I am sure you do *remember*, that being unable to hold out any longer against the unchristian-like, (though sufficiently popish-like,) persecutions of the Corfu priests, I determined upon a change of place, and, by your advice, proceeded to Zante. Upon my arrival I sought Mr. Croggon, to whom you had kindly given me a letter of introduction. He endeavoured to procure me some scholars; and, although a gentleman of very little influence in the island, (the reason of which you know yourself,) he yet succeeded so far, as to place me in a way of living independently, if priestly persecutions would permit me. I had not been very long at Zante, when priestly machinations again broke out, though not in so open, yet in a more insidious manner than at Corfu. I had determined, from my first arrival, to keep myself clear of all communication with the Roman Catholic clergy of the place, and had so far succeeded as to baffle all their attempts, though many were made, of becoming acquainted with me. Finding all their manœuvres without success, they changed their mode of attack, and fixed upon a plan, which, for its baseness, would do honour to any of the most renowned ministers of Satan's empire. And what

do you think this plan was? Nothing less than to deprive me of life and honour at the same time. They hired a Roman Catholic non-commissioned officer, belonging to a British regiment quartered in the island, and having first worked on his weak, superstitious mind, through the organ of confession, they persuaded him that he would do a meritorious action, and worthy of a plenary indulgence, if he deprived me of life, or at least devised some method of driving me from Zante. They represented me, at the same time, to him, as an excommunicated person, and an apostate from "*our holy mother, the church.*" This certainly will appear incredible to you, as it has also appeared to me, when first told of it. Though well acquainted with the existence of such an abominable theory in the church of Rome, I yet could hardly believe it possible, that the priests, monsters as they are, would dare put it in practice in a country boasting British protection, and, therefore, unused to such abominations. Indeed, the mind can hardly conceive it possible, that human prejudice and bigotry could go so far as to lay down as a principle of morality, that "*to deprive a fellow-creature of life is a meritorious act in the sight of God;*" for, however popish theologians might endeavour to cover over the plain words by introducing the clause "*when the good of the church requires it,*" &c. the theory, in itself, is abominable, and the practice of it always amounts to "murder." It would seem, that some popish teachers themselves are ashamed of it, from their denying its very existence, which they would not do, if they could, in any way, defend or excuse it.—But to return.

The soldier, fortified with a general absolution before-hand, devised, I know not what method of becoming acquainted with me. If I am not mistaken,



he called at my lodgings one morning, and introduced himself by saying, that he had three children whom he wished, that I should attend one hour every day, to teach them Italian. He promised me, at the same time, eight dollars a month, as a compensation. I first doubted his ability to pay so much, but farther inquiry satisfied me that he had the means, having, besides his pay as a non-commissioned officer, another salary from some government employment. Thus, thrown off my guard, and not having the least suspicion, (and how could I?) of any evil intended me, I frequently met with the aforesaid man. One day in particular, he invited me to accompany him to a friend's house. I consented. He conducted me to a house, not very distant from the "*caffè dei preti*," (the priests' coffee-house,) and to my great astonishment, ushered me into a room, where, the first thing that attracted my notice, was four or five priests carousing; some of them in a beastly state of intoxication. It was now too late to retreat. They prevailed upon me to sit down, and as an introduction to conversation, handed me a glass of—what I then thought was wine, but which I afterward discovered, to my cost, to be—*poison*, with a colouring of wine. I drank it—and in a few moments after became insensible. I recollect nothing farther of what occurred. The next morning I awoke in a burning fever, which continued, without intermission for ten days. I was, as I was afterward informed, carried in a state of insensibility to my lodgings. The garrison physician, who was a friend of mine, being sent for, he immediately gave it as his opinion, that I had been poisoned. To his skill and treatment, I owe, under God, my life. It was well for me that the poison was so powerful, and that it caused immediate insensibility; for had it been less rapid in its operations, I would have retired to bed,

without any suspicion of the real cause of my sickness, and then sunk into an eternal sleep.

The civil authorities of Zante wished to set on foot an inquiry on the subject, but I begged that it might be dropped, being unwilling to render myself an object of curiosity, and fearing other attempts on my life. In about fifteen days I found myself sufficiently recovered to depart from the island—a thing I had before determined upon. I passed on, accordingly, to Cephalonia, where I remained but a few days. From Cephalonia I went to Patrass, and thence to Nauplion, or Napoli di Romania. Not being able to procure employment in the latter city, and not having the wit to live without it, I resolved to leave the civilized world altogether, and try my fortune among the Turks. A vessel departing for Smyrna, (Asia Minor,) presented an opportunity of putting my design in execution. I took a passage in her, and without any thing remarkable having occurred during the voyage, I arrived safely in this city, (Smyrna.) I am now residing in the house of the Rev. W. B. Lewis, an Irish clergyman, and missionary to the Jews of this city. He has treated me with exceedingly great kindness, and I hope, through his influence, to be shortly in a way of being useful to myself and others.

This, my dear sir, is a brief narrative of what occurred, since my departure from Corfu, and of the *how*, the *why*, and the *wherefore*, I left Zante. A great change has also taken place in my spiritual concerns. You knew me when bordering on deism, and you had also the consideration to attribute such a state of mind, rather to the absurd doctrines of the church from which I had lately escaped, than to any innate, or natural depravity, peculiar to myself. You judged right. The transition from popery to Christianity is rarely, if ever, the work of a day.

It requires some time to heal the wounds inflicted on the mind by popish superstitions. Now, I trust, however, that, without presumption, I can say, "*I have found a Saviour.*" I acknowledge the hand of God, even in his chastisements. Perhaps he has made use of the above sufferings, only to bring me to a closer union with Himself. My reliance upon His mercy is so strong, that I would not *now* shrink from the whole court of Rome, with the pope at its head, if it should think proper to begin a crusade against my insignificance. Neither pope, nor popery, priest, nor priest-craft, shall separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. I conclude then, protesting myself

Your obliged, humble servant,

S. I. MAHONEY.

From the foregoing letter, the reader will be able to judge of the difficulties into which my renunciation of popery had plunged me. He will also acquire a knowledge of the manner, in which the the pope's myrmidons, the priests, treat those whose consciences oblige them to separate from their communion. Many other instances could be given, equal and even surpassing in heinousness that by which my own life was endangered, but as this book has already reached a greater bulk, than was at first intended, I shall pass them over in silence *for the present*. Before I conclude, however, I must say a few words, on the state of religion in general, and more especially on the state of the popish religion at Smyrna.

The Greek church is that, which, next to Mahometanism, counts the greater number of adherents at Smyrna. The Greek priests of Smyrna are generally better educated, and more enlightened, than priests of the same church in the Morea, and islands

of the Archipelago : they are however, equally superstitious, and sunk into the same indifference for the Scriptures, which distinguishes the latter.— There are many schools kept by priests, wherein the children are taught to read and write. The Scriptures are also read in some of them; but the latter are chiefly under the direction of protestant missionaries. The Greek clergy of Smyrna, is in general a very moral body of men. The greater part of those composing it, is married; which perhaps is the reason, that very few examples of public scandal—so very frequent in popish countries—are afforded by priests.

The pope has also his adherents at Smyrna. There are two convents of Latin monks there : one called "*il convento Francese*" (French convent) belonging to the *respectable* order of Capuchins; the other, to the no less *respectable* one of the "*Zoccolanti*," or *wooden-shod* Franciscans. In the latter, the popish missionary bishop resides. He is a Frenchman, and is possessed of as *little* Christianity, and as *much* bigotry and superstition, as distinguished his countrymen before the memorable revolution of '89, and which led them, in the end, to establish *by law*, the worship of the "*goddess of reason*." The monks in Smyrna come up, in point of morality, with their brethren at Jerusalem; a description of whom has been already given. Popery is indeed the same, in every place. Popish practices, and popish doctrines have the same demoralizing effect on the lives of the followers of popery at Rome, as at Jerusalem; at Smyrna, as in Ireland. The monks make use of the same arts for extorting money from the deluded people in one place as in the other. Monks indeed, wherever they might be found, may take for their *motto*, the Italian verses :

Con arte, e con inganno  
 Si vive la metà dell'anno  
 Con inganno, e con arte  
 Si vive l'altra parte.

By *art* and by *deceit*  
 One half the year, we *eat* ;  
 By *deceit* and by *art*  
 We *eat*, the remaining part.\*

The monks of Smyrna are, for the most part, Italians, or Smyrniotes. I knew one of the latter, who studied at Rome, and whom I saw afterward at Smyrna. His name is "Padre Giovanni Battista," (Father John Baptist.) Whilst a student at Rome, he was distinguished for nothing more than for his asinine stupidity. He has, however, since his arrival at Smyrna, acquired the name of a great preacher, and is esteemed highly by some of the people ; but more especially by his fair penitents, to some of whom he has been the cause (and I know it from good authority) of giving the title of "Mamma" a title similar to his own of "Padre," thus proving himself a father, in the double sense of the word ; as a *priest*, and, as it is received in common *parlance*. Indeed, I doubt much, if there be a popish priest in the world, who is not more entitled to the endearing title of "Father" than their friends give them credit for.

It is now full time to bring this work to a close, for indeed I fear, that the reader, (if it will ever be read by any one,) is already as tired of reading, as I myself am of relating, the abominations of popery, and of her soul-deceiving ministers. Let it not be

\* The reader will have the goodness to excuse the above abortive attempt at poetry. The Gods have not made me a poet, nor do I lay any pretensions to the title of one.



supposed, that it is against the latter as *men*, that this work is directed. No, it is not with a view of bringing odium on priests, as men or individuals, that these pages have been put together. It is against their doctrines and against their practices—the necessary consequences of such doctrines. I love a priest, as well as I love any other of my fellow-creatures; but then, I do not love him for his being a *priest*, but because he is a *man*. Were I to look on him only as a priest, I should be rather inclined to hate him, as a personification of dishonesty; for I cannot conceive it possible, that an honest man could remain a popish priest, that is, a teacher of false doctrines and deceiver of the people. There are, perhaps, some priests who are really convinced of the truth of the doctrines they teach, and of the lawfulness of the practices, which are peculiarly the church of *Rome's* own; but these I fear are few, very few in number. I have not, during the many years I was domesticated with the popish clergy, ever known one of them, whose talents were above mediocrity, a believer in the absurdities, which, as a priest, he was obliged to teach the people. They were, for the most part, infidels; and those who were not infidels, were *protestants*, really and truly protesting in their own minds against the abominations of popery, with as much sincerity, as the most zealous Christians have ever done. Personal safety obliged them to keep their abhorrence of popery to themselves; but if they had the use of their own free will, they would soon throw off, as many have done, when an opportunity presented, the outside of popery, and declare themselves Gospel Christians. The church of Rome, then, according to my opinion, is wholly upheld by the secular arm, in those countries, where she is the established church, and by some few men of talents, who, though not believing

in her doctrines, yet defend her, because they get a subsistence by her. In those countries where she is not the established church, she is upheld by the ignorance of the people, the cunning of the priests, and last, not least, by the persecutions of protestant governments. Ireland will serve as an example of the latter method of supporting popery. Will any one suppose, that it was through love for the pope, or his religion, that the Irish resisted, and still resist all attempts to make them Gospel Christians? I would as soon believe that the church of Rome is the church of Christ, as believe any such thing! The true and only support of popery in Ireland, was the persecuting spirit of protestants; that is, of those, who, disguised under the name of protestants, but who were really little better than d—ls, came to butcher and slaughter the unfortunate Irish, for the sake of obtaining possession of their properties, or depriving them of their emoluments. The *penal code*, that disgrace to England, has then been of more real service to the pope and to the Irish priests, than all the bulls the former issued from the Vatican, or than all the curses the latter pronounced from their altars. When the people were oppressed, to whom could they more naturally fly for consolation than to a minister of religion? This riveted the people's chains, and the priests' power grew stronger, according as the oppressions received from their protestant task masters grew more insupportable. Oppression and persecution are then the real causes, to which the adherence of Ireland to popery must be attributed, and not, by any means, because the Irish love popery for its own sake—a thing impossible, for they do not understand it.

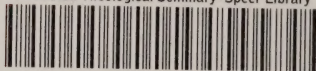




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